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THE SCIENCE OF FOLK-LORE

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

BALOR WITH THE EVIL EYE, STUDIES IN CELTIC AND FRENCH LITERATURE, NEW YORK, 1927.

ETUDES DE MYTHOLOGIE ET DE FOLKLORE GERMANIQUES, PARIS, 1928.

The Science of Folklore

by

ALEXANDER HAGGERTY KRAPPE

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TO
ARTHUR BERNARD COOK

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A.J.Ph.	*The American Journal of Philology*
A.J.S.L.L.	*The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature*
A.N.F.	*Arkiv for Nordisk Filologi*
A.S.N.S.L.	*Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen*
A.R.	*Archivum Romanicum*
B.H.	*Bulletin Hispanique*
C.J.	*The Classical Journal*
E.St.	*Englische Studien*
F.F.C.	*Folklore Fellows Communications*
G.R.M.	*Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift*
H.B.V.	*Hessische Blätter für Volkskunde*
J.A.F.	*The Journal of American Folk-Lore*
J.E.G.Ph.	*The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*
K.H.M.	*Kinder- und Hausmärchen der Brüder Grimm*
Kl. Schr.	*Kleinere Schriften*
M.L.N.	*Modern Language Notes*
M.L.R.	*The Modern Language Review*
M.Ph.	*Modern Philology*
M.S.G.V.	*Mitteilungen der Schlesischen Gesellschaft für Volkskunde*
N.M.	*Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*
N.S.M.	*Nuovi Studi Medievali*
N.T.T.	*Nieuw Theologisch Tijdschrift*
P.M.L.A.	*Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*
R.C.	*Revue Celtique*
R.E.T.P.	*Revue d'Ethnographie et des traditions populaires*
R.H.	*Revue Hispanique*
Rh.M.	*Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*
R.L.C.	*Revue de Littérature comparée*
R.R.	*The Romanic Review*
R.T.P.	*Revue des Traditions populaires*
S.A.V.	*Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde*
S.S.N.	*Scandinavian Studies and Notes*
Z.D.A.	*Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum*
Z.D.Ph.	*Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*
Z.F.S.L.	*Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur*
Z.N.V.	*Zeitschrift für niederdeutsche Volkskunde*
Z.R.Ph.	*Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie*
Z.R.W.V.	*Zeitschrift für rheinische und westfälische Volkskunde*
Z.V.V.	*Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde*

PREFACE

THIS book owes its inception to the days spent by the author in London, while attending the sessions of the Jubilee Congress of the British Folk-Lore Society.

Handbooks of and introductions to folk-lore are certainly not wanting. Yet one misses in English some dependable *ouvrage d'ensemble,* fairly comprehensive and methodically arranged, doing approximately the same service that has been rendered by the German *Handbücher der Volkskunde* published by Heims at Leipzig, a few years before the outbreak of the Great War.

Folk-lore is, in fact has been for a considerable number of years, an historical science, having its own methods of research and admitting of the same system of checks and verifications as any other. With its sister sciences it may combine, in various ways, to make up the cycle of our knowledge of man's past life. From this follows that it may assume the rank of an anxiliary science to any or all of them, and it has done so repeatedly, notably to the various philologies, history, ethnography, and the history of religion. The present writer would therefore be particularly happy if his book could prove useful to fellow-workers in such related fields, anxious to acquaint themselves with the fundamental facts and working-methods of folk-lore.

In the choice of the examples and illustrations I have throughout given preference to tales, rites, and beliefs of which I happen to have a first-hand knowledge. There is no value whatever, to my mind, in the composition of a thirteenth book out of the materials culled from twelve others. Where the results of other scholars have been utilized, I have convinced myself of their essential correctness, judged, of course, from the present state of our knowledge. Where a given problem has not yet yielded to a definite and generally accepted solution I have frankly stated that such is the case.

In the bibliographical parts I have limited myself to referring the reader to the latest authoritative treatise existing on the subject, because that treatise will of course give further bibliographical data. The mere copying of bibliographies from the books of others, though extensively practised in certain countries and encouraged by certain *universities*, is not only a waste but a genuine piece of literary dishonesty.

In my polemics against the Anthropological School I hope I have not been more severe than Andrew Lang himself was in his day with the sun-mythological fancies of Max Müller. I only wish I could have been as witty! Throughout the present book I have been interested not so much in establishing a new dogma (of such we have already too many), as in laying down a general working method, essentially of the historical type. That this method itself is infallible in all points I neither claim nor even assume. On the contrary, I am certain that it will be modified and improved upon as time goes on. Yet I am no less certain that in its fundamental features it will stand as the soundest of all those hitherto devised, and I may say this the more freely because I can myself lay no claim to its invention.

In accordance with this method I shall be found, especially in the treatment of oral folk-lore, i.e. stories and songs of the popular type, to have adopted the purely literary view-point. That is, I conceive of folk-tales and folk-songs as purely literary manifestations of the popular genius, acting under the same impulses as the productive mind of literary men, scholars and artists. The two differ only in much the same things in which different literary schools are apt to be at variance, that is, in questions of taste and methods of technique. This being the case, I make bold to claim that productions of the popular mind demand and deserve the same standards of criticism. There is no value whatever in refusing to call platitudinous and trite what deserves to be called so and what would inevitably be called so were it a literary product in the general acceptation of the term. Nor need there be any fear lest folk-lore materials should suffer thereby. The critical standards of the eighteenth century are a thing of the past, fortunately, and many other things beside folk-lore which did not meet with the approval of Voltaire and Pope, are yet ranked as the very highest expressions of artistic feeling and inspiration.

One more caution. This book is not meant to be an encyclopædia of folk-lore. If it were, the arrangement would obviously be quite different and its size considerably larger. While I have striven for completeness, I have not for a moment thought of tiring the reader with a mass of loose details, particularly in the chapters dealing with Superstition, Plant and Animal Lore, details which can be treated satisfactorily only in the form of a dictionary or an encyclopædia.

Although in this exposition of facts I shall be found to hold views not yet generally accepted among British folklorists, it would be futile to deny the great indebtedness under which I feel myself to British science and thought; that indebtedness will, I dare say, be evident on every page and perhaps most where I shall be found to differ from them most widely in my conclusions and inferences. Thanks are due in no small measure also to Dr. Robert Eisler, for helpful suggestions; to Fräulein Erika Buttke, of Berlin, who obligingly verified a number of references; and to my friends Professor Allison Peers (of the University of Liverpool) and Professor A. B. Botkin (of the University of Oklahoma), who went over the proofs. What I owe to the ‘spirto gentile’ whose books and essays were for a large part my mainstay and intellectual support during the ten long years of my exile, the dedication will sufficiently indicate.

A. H. K.

PARIS,
Whit-Sunday, 1929.

'A work of great interest might be compiled upon the origin of popular fiction, and the transmission of similar tales from age to age, and from country to country.'

—SIR WALTER SCOTT

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INTRODUCTION

THE term *Folk-lore* was coined in 1846 by the English antiquarian William John Thoms, to take the place of the rather awkward expression *Popular Antiquities*. The word has since met with approval in practically all European countries and is now current in many languages other than English. The German *Volkskunde* can in no way be regarded as an equivalent of the English *folk-lore* since it has a far wider application, including, among other things, the study of peasant art and peasant craft. Folk-lore, on the other hand, limits itself to a study of the unrecorded traditions of the people as they appear in popular fiction, custom and belief, magic and ritual.[1] The objection frequently raised against the English term, that it has a twofold acceptation, designating both the material and the science which attempts to study that material, is of no particular force since it applies with equal cogency to other disciplines, the most obvious being, of course, history itself.

The scope of folk-lore, the preliminary tasks of collecting and classifying, both indispensable to any science, historical or natural, accomplished, may be expressed as follows: It is to reconstruct a spiritual history of Man, not as exemplified by the outstanding works of poets and thinkers, but as represented by the more or less inarticulate voices of the 'folk'.

Folk-lore is an historical science[2]: 'historical', because it attempts to throw light on man's past; a 'science', because it endeavours to attain this goal, not by speculation or deduction from some abstract principle agreed upon *a priori*, but by the inductive method which, in the last analysis, underlies all scientific research, whether historical or natural.

This last statement may call for a few additional observations. As is generally known, the historical sciences are distinguished from the natural ones in that the latter have at their disposal two different modes of procedure, observation and experiment, whilst to the former only observation, in the form of a study of the documents, is open. Historical study, therefore, involves a careful evaluation of the documents and their utilization with due regard for their chronology. That, after all, is the essence of the 'historical method' as evolved by Savigny and the Brothers Grimm at the beginning of the last century. It is from this view-point that folk-lore has been most generally subjected to the criticism of historians. For it is of course evident that the vast majority of the documentary materials collected and utilized by folklorists cannot claim great antiquity. To this objection the folklorist may submit the following considerations. The mere date of a given document is of little consequence, both in history and in folk-lore. For example, Saint Jerome somewhere in his writings makes the casual remark that the languages of the Galatians of Asia Minor and of the Treveri in Gaul are very much alike. From this statement professional historians have universally concluded that in the fourth century of our era the Celtic dialects were still spoken in Asia Minor and in Gaul. It so happens, however, that Saint Jerome was merely copying Varro's lost *Antiquitates* who in his turn had obtained the information in question from the work of Poseidonios, a writer of the first century B.C. Thus the true date of the document antedates by five centuries its formal date.[3] All historians of classical antiquity are of course familiar with this problem of which I have just given an example, though, as the illustration also shows, the practical application is apt to lag somewhat behind the golden principles of Theory. Folk-lore, however, acts on no other principles. It merely states that the modernity of a given document is not opposed to its utilization, provided it can be shown to be derived from a source considerably older.[4]

Thus far there exists no appreciable difference between the methods employed by careful historians and those in use among folklorists. There is, however, more to be said on the subject. History being a science of documents, its domain proper may be supposed to end where the documents give out. If this principle were acted upon, History would fall considerably short of its mission, which is, after all, to reconstruct the external or political vicissitudes of Man. History therefore feels empowered —and it undoubtedly is—in the absence of documents to draw various conclusions from linguistic and archæological data. The number of these inferential conclusions increases as we pass from political history to economic and social history, where the documents become scantier, since for one reason or another the attention of the professional chroniclers, the clerks of all ages, has always been absorbed chiefly, if not exclusively, by the outward trappings and the display of this great stage. Folk-lore faces the same difficulty, but in order to overcome it, it does not have to step outside its own domain; it merely applies to its materials the 'comparative method'.

The term itself is apt to arouse serious misgivings, since it was used, though in an entirely different acceptation, by the various schools of solar and lunar mythologists so deservedly discredited at the time of this writing. Suffice it to say that the science of folk-lore has as much to do with those fancies as modern chemistry has with that pseudo-science the chief object of which was the discovery of the philosopher's stone. The 'comparative method' in the modern meaning of the expression[5] starts from the principle that ever since his first appearance on earth Man has undergone, in his spiritual make-up, a gradual though slow, evolution, newer and more complicated conceptions taking the place of older and more rudimentary ones. This principle, however opposed to orthodox Christianity, is in strict accordance, not only with the observed facts, but with the results attained by Darwinism in general. The opposite view, to wit, that modern savages have degenerated from a once higher stage of mental culture, is not borne out by any observed fact, although there have existed certain isolated examples, always limited to small social groups, showing a process of degeneracy due, in every case, to ascertainable historical facts. The best possible illustration for such a process is furnished by the fate of the Scandinavian colonies in Greenland in the later Middle Ages, unearthed in recent years. Yet even there it is certainly a noteworthy fact that the spiritual degeneracy of that group appears to have been of a far slower growth than their physical degeneracy. Man's intellectual power, however varying in degree, is yet essentially the same in kind. From this follows that his spiritual growth in different parts of the globe and under different climes has on the whole assumed very similar forms, however great the differences in pace. Thus a certain human tribe, in a certain spot of the globe, will at this time represent the stage of spiritual evolution left behind by another tribe, in a different spot, several hundred years ago. Thus a study of the former tribe will throw light on the past of the latter, a light highly welcome when there exist no documents, or very unsatisfactory documents, bearing on that past.

Nor need the two spots just mentioned be very far apart. In every modern country the rural populations are still addicted to beliefs and practices long since given up by the bulk of the city people. But the conclusion is certainly justified that the ancestors of the present-day city-dwellers, who lived at a time when there were no large cities or who simply had not yet moved into the city, followed the same customs and held the same beliefs as the contemporary peasants. Again, therefore, we may say that the cultural stage held by one social group will throw light on the former social stage of some other group.

In the city proper, as is well known, the typical proletarian is the most traditionless creature imaginable. Yet even there certain exceptions are to be noted. Certain callings and professions, however humble, have a tendency to foster the retention of ancient customs and practices that have died out among the bulk of the population, and thus one social class may be said to represent a stage of mental development overcome by he others.[6]

Human society even in the form of some high civilization will thus be seen to show side by side the old and the new. On these very islands there are fast trains running beside, and sometimes even above, holy wells, and many a man may use the train, nay, may drive its engine, and yet believe in ghosts or the banshee. Nor does this imply a danger of constant friction. There is no country in which so much toleration has been shown to old forms in the midst of modern life as there has been in England, yet the number of serious clashes has been negligible, though in less than a century the State has passed through two crises which would have proved the undoing of most others. On the other hand, there are probably few lands now in existence in which the traditional element has been reduced so radically by a ruthless standardization as it has been in the United States; yet even recent occurrences will not give one an impression that such standardization has done away with open clashes between different groups and with an ill-concealed intolerance all around.

Two errors in the form of hasty conclusions from what has been said above must be carefully guarded against. The modern savage is no ‘primitive’, even where he has been least touched by Europeans and Americans anxious to bear the white man's burden. He was removed, by an immeasurably long development, from that stage which we are pleased to call by the illusive term ‘primitive’, as early as the time when the first white man set foot on the virgin soil of his native land.

Nor is it permissible to equate the modern peasant, even in the most backward regions of Europe, with the savage. Both are again separated by a vast stretch of human development during which the former, moreover, was repeatedly open to the great civilizations, city-bred civilizations, certain to have influenced, be it ever so little, his spiritual make-up.

As a consequence of this connexion of our science with the social development of man, its study has always flourished only in the great city civilizations, that is, toward the end of each cycle of civilization. Among the Alexandrians there were assuredly folklorists, though their works have for the most part been lost, so that it is only from the compilers of imperial times that we can gather an idea of their activity, whilst its influence upon literature may be seen from such works as Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In the Occident, folk-lore is a daughter of the Romantic Movement. Its founder was no other than Jacob Grimm, who, in his great work *Deutsche Mythologie*, laid the scientific foundations of our discipline. It is an odd but not altogether unprecedented fact that the immediate influence of this book on the scholarship of Grimm's own country was but small. There the solar and thunder mythologists all too soon frustrated the good effects it might have had, and the only truly great successor of Jacob Grimm, Wilhelm Mannhardt, could not obtain even a university chair. The charming poet and scholar Ludwig Uhland, though greatly influenced by Grimm's work, left no school behind him, and Karl Müllenhoff, excellent mythologist though he was, won his justly great reputation as a grammarian. Elard Hugo Meyer, the editor of the fourth and definitive edition of the *Deutsche Mythologie*, was little more than an industrious compiler, and it was only toward the end of the century, largely in consequence of Mannhardt's late appreciated books, that German folklorists decided to go back to the methods of Jacob Grimm. Suffice it to cite in this connexion the names of scholars such as Karl Weinhold, Wilhelm Hertz, and Friedrich von der Leyen.

Owing to the ascendancy of German scholarship in Great Britain a very close parallel development may be observed there. Grimm's and Uhland's work being largely inaccessible, except to those able to read the none too easy German prose of these scholars, their influence was on the whole negligible. On the other hand, the solar mythologists were represented in England by one of their most brilliant representatives, the late Max Müller. It is no wonder, therefore, that these fancies held great sway down to the end of the century. It was the Anthropological School, led by scholars such as E. B. Tylor and Andrew Lang, who did for the English public what Mannhardt had tried to do for the German, though with infinitely better success. It was, after all, good British common sense which finally asserted itself and to which we owe, in the last analysis, the great productions of the Anthropological School, culminating in the *Golden Bough*, in comparison with which all other attempts to solve the riddle of the sphinx must appear dwarfish.

The Literary School of folklorists, though largely eclectic, being committed to no fixed dogma but merely to a definite method of procedure, owes its origin to Th. Benfey. Its great sponsors were Gaston Paris, Emmanuel Cosquin and Gédéon Huet in France and, in the present century, the Finnish and Scandinavian folklorists. It has had few adherents in Great Britain and may be said to be largely unknown there, which fact is, probably, the chief justification of the present book.

One word more, on a subject which cannot but attract interest in a time such as ours. The study of History is generally supposed to make for understanding and tolerance in human affairs, though certain of its more recent professors have not striven very hard to bear out the general truth of this assumption. Folk-lore certainly should inculcate those virtues as much as, if not more than, History. The following consideration will make this clear. When the first Mediterranean explorers reached these isles, their inhabitants were, there can be no doubt, on a general stage of civilization equalled by that of the Fiji Islanders toward the middle of the last century. A span of a little more than 2,000 years thus separates the white man from savagery. Now if it is borne in mind that our species is probably older than 200,000 years at least, we have very little reason, it would seem, to look down upon our less fortunate brother, and we probably should not do so were it not for man's well-known lack of all sense of proportion.

NOTES

[1] K. Krohn, *Die folkloristische Arbeitsmethode*, Oslo, 1926.

[2] The well-known work of Sir George Lawrence Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science*, London, 1908, is of no utility in this connexion, since the author sets out to prove that folkloristic material may serve to establish definite *historical* facts. This is nothing but the famous theory of the Brothers Grimm and of Gaston Paris (though in a somewhat modified form) which sees in the popular epic and ballad more or less distorted history. After the researches of M. Joseph Bédier and M. Ernest Tonnelat on the Old French epic and the German Nibelungen Cycle respectively this view is no longer tenable. Folk-lore can never help in the reconstruction of *political* history; it is solely and singly concerned with the history of human ideas and their utterance in words and gestures, that is, in tales, songs, and rites.

[3] *R.C.*, XLVI, 126–29.

[4] Incredible as it may seem, even professional folklorists have fallen into this common error. Thus the late E. H. Meyer, one of the *epigoni* who, in Germany, followed in the wake of the Brothers Grimm, made the discovery that the motive of the spring wort does not occur in texts older than the Renaissance period, and he promptly inferred the recent origin of the legend. Unfortunately, he had overlooked the fairly important fact that it is found in Pliny's *Natural History* (X. 18).

[5] Cf. Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*[3], London, 1891 ; I quote from the American edition of 1883. The best practical application of this method to problems of oral folk-lore will be found in the brilliant pages of Sir J. G. Frazer, especially in his *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament*, London, 1918.

[6] Cf. Paul Sébillot, *Légendes et curiosités des métiers*, Paris, 1895.

THE SCIENCE OF FOLK-LORE

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CHAPTER I

THE FAIRY TALE

WHEN toward the beginning of the last century the scientific, i.e. methodical, study of folk-lore was begun in Europe, essentially as a fruit of the Romantic Movement, the fairy tale was the first to attract general attention, and the *Household Tales* of the Brothers Grimm overshadowed all previous collections of fairy tales, while at the same time setting the collectors to work all over Europe.

By *fairy tale* we mean a continued narrative generally of a certain length, practically always in prose, serious on the whole, though humour is by no means excluded, centring in one hero or heroine, usually poor and destitute at the start, who, after a series of adventures in which the supernatural element plays a conspicuous part, attains his goal and lives happy ever after.

A fairy tale will thus be seen to be made up of a number of adventures or *motives*,* rather loosely, though not illogically, knit together, with the hero or the heroine as a central figure. The motives make up the plot of the tale or the *type*. Each type consists then of a varying number of motives in a given sequence.[1] Thus if we consider the well-known tale-type of *Nicht Nocht Naething*, we find the following motives:

(1) Child promised to a demon.
(2–4) Three tasks imposed upon the captive by the demon.
(5) Flight of captive with the demon's daughter.
(6–8) Three lifeless objects reply for the fugitives.

---

*Throughout this book I shall use the good English form *motive* rather than the pedantic *motif*, borrowed from the French, which in turn acquired the meaning it now has in French folk-lore under the influence of the German *Motiv*. There is no reason why the English *motive* should not be capable of the same extension of meaning as the French *motif*; for the French at all events did not think of importing into their language the German form.

(9) Pursuit by the demon.

(10–12) Three objects thrown out by fugitives to create magic obstacles.

(13) The curse of the demon's wife.

(14) The kiss causing the hero to forget his bride.

(15–17) Three adventures of the forsaken bride with importunate suitors.

(18) The undoing of the charm and the recognition.

A number of all known motives have this peculiarity that they occur only in a limited number of tale-types. Others, on the contrary, are quite ubiquitous, and their presence is not restricted to only a few types. Thus in the foregoing illustration (1) belongs to the latter category, whilst most of the others would be classed with the former.

The sum total of all motives is very considerable, exceeding, probably, 10,000.[2] Among them there are naturally certain ones sufficiently alike to exchange places with one another in a given tale. For example, in the type quoted above motives (10–12) may easily be, and often are, replaced by certain others (10a–12a), to wit, a threefold metamorphosis of the fugitives.

Thus it will appear that within certain limits certain motives may be replaced by others doing the same service in the logical sequence of the type. Yet this does not mean at all, as has at times been asserted, that motives are combined arbitrarily in a kaleidoscopic fashion. On the contrary, the cases of permutation represent a very small minority, and as a rule the motives are so definitely shaped, with nothing vague about them, and combine in a fashion so rigorously logical that the type must be considered as an artistic creation, an entity, definitely fixed, as much, or nearly so, as a poem of Tennyson or a novel of Thomas Hardy.

This being the case, it follows that a given type, composed as it is of a variety of motives in logical and fixed sequence, can have been composed only once, in a definite locality, in a definite time, the product of one individual mind. From that locality, which it is not always easy to determine, the type began its migration in all directions, being carried over vast distances, often over entire continents. This fact, again, leads us to a discussion of the variants and the geographical distribution of fairy tales.

The majority of tale-types are known to us by a large number of variants, i.e. oral versions collected from the mouth of the people some time during the nineteenth century. A few are older, some are more recent still, since the activity of the collectors has not, of course, ceased with the new century. The number of all known variants [3] exceeds, for certain types, 100, hailing, as a general rule, from all over Europe (where for obvious reasons the collectors' activity has been most intense), from Asia, including Indonesia, from North and South Africa, and from the American colonies. Central Africa and native Australia are conspicuous only by their absence. Nor can this significant fact be laid down altogether to the want of collectors. On the contrary, this distribution of variants fully justifies us in considering the fairy tale as essentially an old-world product, taken to Indonesia by Hindoo and Mohammedan culture currents, to East Africa by the Arabs, to South Africa by the Dutch settlers, to the New World by the colonizing Europeans. At all events, the European provenance of the South African and American variants has been proved for all known types.[4]

It may, furthermore, be seriously questioned whether either Ethiopians or American Indians (exception being made for the ancient American civilizations and their remnants) are at all capable of the sustained interest required by the ordinary fairy tale with its string of various adventures. Certainly, the variants of old-world tales collected among the North American Indians give one an impression that their narrators were incapable even of preserving a good tale, to say nothing of inventing a new one.

Most types are not represented exclusively by the variants collected in modern times. It is of course true that the scientific interest taken in fairy tales is essentially a modern phenomenon and, as has been said above, largely due to the Romantic Movement. Yet long before the nineteenth century fairy tales have had an aesthetic appeal which in many cases made it possible for them to penetrate into the literature of a given country, being thus set down in writing sometimes centuries ago and preserved to us, often enough, in the form they must have had at that period. One may refer to these written versions, in contradistinction to the oral ones, as 'historical' variants. Without discussing here the question of the proper evaluation of those historical variants, a subject which will require our attention further on, we may say at once that the existence of such a variant in a given literature proves definitely that the type to which it belongs was current, or at least known, in the country in question. Certain tale types are thus shown, by their historical variants, to be thousands of years old.

For the most part these historical variants are found inserted in works of literature, epics, novels, chronicles, etc. No one then thought of collecting or publishing them as creations of value in themselves. In fact, the first work which may with a certain justice be claimed as a collection of fairy tales, the *Piacevoli Notti* of the Italian Straparola of Caravaggio,[5] dates from the middle of the sixteenth century. Yet even there the genuine fairy tales form a minority, and it is to be suspected that if Straparola included them at all, the reason was that he felt he would run short of *novelle* and that after all he wanted to do more than merely copy Boccaccio. From the seventeenth century dates the *Pentamerone* of the Neapolitan Giambattista Basile, which is the first genuine collection of fairy tales.[6] At the end of the seventeenth century Perrault's famous *Contes de ma Mère l'Oye* was published in Paris. The eighteenth century saw the publication of other collections, of somewhat lesser interest, both in Italy and in France.[7] With the nineteenth century begins the methodical study of the whole subject.

It is characteristic, no doubt, of man's strange turn of mind that at the very beginning the new science should have put the question of the origin of the fairy tale and boldly attempted an answer. The linguistic unity of the Indo-European group having just been established by Franz Bopp, it was in a way natural that, with the Aryan variants in the majority and the non-Aryan ones almost entirely wanting as yet, the Brothers Grimm should have considered the fairy tale as a typically Aryan product. Another factor to be considered in this connexion is the endeavour of scholars at that period to reconstruct what they thought the primitive Aryan religion and their opinion that precisely the oldest stratum of that religion was represented by the myths of Greece and Ancient India. The antiquity of those myths thus taken for granted, it was an easy step to regard the fairy tale as a sort of offshoot as it were from the original myth. The *a priori* assumption of an Aryan origin of fairy tales had to be dropped the moment the non-Aryan variants made their appearance in the course of the nineteenth century. As for the second proposition, that fairy tales are the direct descendants of myths, there is of course nothing wrong with it on principle, provided the descendant shows a reasonable amount of resemblance to his ancestor or, to drop the metaphor, that a given fairy tale can be plausibly shown to be derived from a given myth. Unfortunately for the theory, such proof has been forthcoming only for a very small number of tales.

One of the few instances where the theory appears to hold true is the famous story of Blue-Beard, as pointed out by Dr. Paul Kretschmer.[8] The version familiar to all English readers through the text of Charles Perrault, is, in spite of its gruesome features, by no means among the oldest or most primitive. In a certain group of variants, at home chiefly in South-eastern Europe, Blue-Beard requests his *fiancées* to devour a dead man's bone. Two of the sisters refuse and are promptly killed; the third gets away through a ruse. In a Greek text the monster is called *τοῦ κάτω κόσμου ὁ ἀφέντης*, i.e., The Lord of the Lower World, which means that he is Death himself. The underlying idea is familiar from the myth of the rape of Kore and from the common designation of girls who died before their marriage as brides of death. Death, featured as devouring the corpses of the dead throughout the ancient world, looks for a companion to share his horrible repasts, and the girls who refuse have to pay for it with their lives. Charos, the Greek demon of death, is still accompanied by his Charóndissa, and a Modern Greek folksong relates how the two sup on the heads of babies, using the hands of fallen soldiers for their knives and forks.

A fairy tale undoubtedly derived from a myth is the ancient story of the sorceress Kirke of Homeric fame.[9] The variants, extending from the coast of Brittany to Mongolia, have for their centre the countries of the Near East, from which they spread in all directions at a period prior to the composition of the *Odyssey*. The metamorphosis of the heroes into animals is a well-known fairy tale paraphrase for death, and before the narrative became a fairy story the heroine simply slew her paramours when she grew tired of them. Now in the Old Mesopotamian epic of Gilgamesh the hero reproaches the goddess Ishtar who seeks his love, with precisely such crimes, and we know moreover the ritual origin of this myth. The final proof for our derivation of the Kirke episode from the Ishtar Myth is furnished by a Russian variant of the former in which the sorceress is called Marína and accompanied by doves. *Marina*, the Latin equivalent of *Pelagia*, was one of the cult names of the Semitic mother-goddess, the protectress of sailors, whose sacred bird *par excellence* was the dove.

By the middle of the nineteenth century it appeared to all folklorists that the Aryan theory in its general form was no longer tenable. For not only had a considerable number of non-Aryan variants become known in Europe, but also the fixity of the structure in most fairy tales had become clearer. When about that time the interest taken by European scholars in the literature of Ancient India began to shift from the Vedic songs to the narrative literature of the Sanskrit period, the immediate result was the discovery of a number of well-known European fairy tales in the Indian compilations. These facts led Th. Benfey to enunciate, in 1859, his famous theory of the Indian origin of fairy tales and their migration to Europe.[10] Benfey was not primarily a folklorist, and he never thought of subjecting his Indian or the European variants to a close analysis. Had he thought of it, the probability is that he would not have had the time and the means for such an undertaking. He allowed himself therefore to be guided by the general impression of tale-types as represented by variants of the Grimm collection or by some of the historical variants quoted above. His thesis rested then rather on the results of his brilliant intuition than on strict scientific proofs. Neither can his mode of procedure be called bold. On the contrary, where his results have been shown, by more recent investigations, to rest on an insecure basis or to be in contradiction with the facts, the cause lies with the insufficiency of the materials at his disposal. In some cases he did not even go as far as his materials would have plainly justified, simply because he was not prepared to subject the stories to a searching analysis. The best example of this hesitancy is perhaps the Indian origin of the Greek story of the seer Teiresias.[11]

Teiresias, it will be recalled, according to one version was struck with blindness because he had seen a goddess naked. He was successively converted into a woman and again into a man for beholding a snake couple in the act of copulation, and he rendered a judgment to settle a dispute which had arisen between Zeus and Hera on the important question whether man or woman conceived the greater pleasure in conjugal intercourse. He had decided that it was woman, thus making Hera lose her wager, and she punished him by striking him with blindness. Zeus, however, indemnified him by making him a seer. Benfey recognized the striking resemblance of this tale with an episode of the great Indian epic, the *Mahâbhârata*. There a king is transformed into a woman by bathing in a river (quite a banal story incident in Indian fiction). He leaves his kingdom to his 100 sons and retires into the forest, where as a woman he gives birth to 100 more sons, whom he leads into his kingdom to share in the rule. But Indra sows discord between the two groups of sons, so that they kill one another. Assuming the shape of a Brahman, Indra approaches him and asks him which of the two groups of sons he desires most to have brought back to life. Unhesitatingly he chooses those whom he had given birth to as a woman, 'for a woman loves more than a man'. Asked whether he would like to regain his original sex, he prefers to remain a woman, 'for woman has greater pleasure in love than man'. Here the divinity evidently approaches the hero after his first metamorphosis (a point which the Greek texts leave in the dark), which is of course sufficient to give him the competency to answer such a delicate question. If a dependence of the Greek legend upon the Indian parallel be supposed, we may surmise that the retransformation of Teiresias into a man was originally the punishment inflicted upon him by Hera, who thus wanted, in accordance with his own pronouncement, to reduce the ratio of his enjoyment. The quarrel of the divine couple and the malicious vengeance of the angry goddess would then be an addition to the Eastern tale made in post-Homeric Greece. This does not solve the question of Teiresias' first metamorphosis into a woman. The solution is furnished by the motive given to explain his blindness (a fact which needed no motivation since most seers were blind), the beholding a goddess in *négligé*, for which we have another Indian parallel not thought of by Benfey in this connexion. King Ila surprises the god Śiva with the daughter of a mountain giant on a meadow in a *tête-à-tête* highly objectionable to all Puritans. For his indiscretion he is cursed by the angry goddess to be henceforth a woman. Lastly, it is pertinent to ask, where did the episode of the copulating snakes come in in the original version of the Teiresias legend? The answer is given by a third Indian story occurring in the *Munipaticaritram*, a Prakrit work known to Benfey but not recognized by him as capable of furnishing the most important clue to the Greek legend. King Brahmadatta surprises a female snake in an act of adultery and strikes it with his whip. He is slandered by the revengeful female to her husband, who promptly seeks to kill the monarch. Fortunately, he overhears the latter relating the incident to his queen. So the grateful male snake rewards him instead with the gift of understanding the language of animals, i.e., he makes him a seer. Thus the Hellenic Teiresias legend is undoubtedly an Indian tale, badly garbled, which originally read as follows: Witnessing the adultery of a female snake, he punished it by wounding it and was rewarded by the grateful male with the power to understand the language of animals and the sounds of nature. Coming upon a goddess, as she was bathing, he was transformed into a woman. Called in to settle a dispute between Zeus and Hera, he gave the well-known answer and was retransformed into a man by the angry and spiteful goddess.

Benfey's theory of the Indian origin of European fairy (and merry) tales was universally accepted and applied to types which he himself had had no occasion to treat, by successors who did not, as a rule, improve upon his methods. It was for this insufficiency of scientific method that the whole theory was attacked, in 1893, by Joseph Bédier,[12] in his well-known work *Les Fabliaux*. Bédier proved (1) that the intuitive method of Benfey and his successors fell considerably short of the ideals of scholarly accuracy and (2) that merry tales in particular have as a rule such a simple plot that even scientific analysis and a careful comparison of a considerable number of variants will lead to no satisfactory result. He even admitted, for certain types, the possibility of polygenesis, that is, that the same type may have originated independently in different parts of the globe. Inasmuch as Bédier's observations apply to merry tales, they will be dealt with in a subsequent chapter. For most fairy tale types his scepticism goes decidedly too far, as will be shown presently.

In the meantime a new school had arisen in Great Britain, led by Andrew Lang,[13] Sir George Lawrence Gomme[14] and Dr. J. A. MacCulloch.[15] These scholars pointed out that a large number of the motives as well as certain conditions of a political, social and economic nature commonly met with in fairy tales could have been set down only in a society totally different not only from our own but different even from mediaeval and ancient society as depicted by the chroniclers. In other words, fairy tales will have about them a flavour of primitiveness and savagery which would give them a truly venerable age. The question of story migration was rather neglected by this school, and Andrew Lang in particular went so far as to claim polygenesis for a certain number of, if not for all, fairy tales.

This theory is indeed open to very grave objections. Inasmuch as it still appears to have a certain hold on the British public I may be pardoned for taking up this subject at some length. The doctrine of polygenesis, so far as fairy tales are concerned, is probably the most untenable. For it is unthinkable that stories with a plot as complicated as that of *Nicht Nocht Naething* (outlined above) should have arisen independently. In the second place, granting that a given motive could have arisen only in savagery, this fact would prove nothing for the type which may well have incorporated the motives in question in the shape of survivals. But granting also that the type originated in savagery, it can have originated only in the savagery of the particular country where it was first put together. From there it may have migrated (theoretically at least) to countries far removed from that stage of savagery, so that in no case does it prove anything for the past of the people among whom it is now current. Lastly, the so-called primitiveness of certain conditions obtaining in fairy tales has been vastly exaggerated. A few examples to show this may be in place.

In a number of fairy tales kings and princesses are described, in spite of the splendour of their courts, as opening the gates themselves, dispensing, evidently, with footmen and porters. From this it has been concluded that the original 'courts' of fairy tales were of a rather primitive sort and that the trappings represent later accretions. To this it may be pertinent to observe that in the *Lives of the Caesars* of Suetonius and the *Annals* of Tacitus, Claudius and Nero are made to do things which they would certainly never have dreamt of doing, and matters are not much different in the historical novel of a famous Polish writer covering the same period. Should one conclude from this that the court of Rome's first dynasty was 'primitive'? The obvious explanation is that Suetonius and Tacitus repeated the scandals of the barber-shops, and the writers of historical novels imitate Suetonius and Tacitus. It is difficult for ordinary folk to envisage the complicated life of a monarch, and, apart from the houses of gold and stairs of marble, they will inevitably picture to themselves court life in Buckingham Palace in much the same fashion as ordinary life everywhere.

Again, from the fact that almost every hero of fairy tales marries a princess and in due time inherits the kingdom of his father-in-law, the Anthropological School has concluded that at the time when the tales arose, kingdoms passed not to the eldest son but to the daughter or daughters. However, in the average American dime novel the hero, always of thoroughly democratic origin, proves himself to be an incarnation of the ideal and in the end marries the daughter of a millionaire, inheriting in due time, we may suppose, his father-in-law's millions. Should one conclude from that peculiarity that American millionaires are in the habit of transmitting their money to their daughters only, excluding their sons?

Much has been made of the small size of fairy tale kingdoms which always enable the hero to reach the border line in a short time and without the aid of a passenger train. But it is not even necessary to go back to the time of the Heptarchy to reach such a condition. Goethe, it will be recalled, was the minister of a principality which was even smaller.

From the fact that the suitor of the princess is always an outsider the existence of the exogamous marriage system has been inferred. But unless I am very much mistaken this very 'exogamous' marriage system still exists practically intact among the European royal families.

The well-known types of the *Animal Bridegroom* and the *Animal Bride* have been connected with the totemic system. Unfortunately, the only common feature is the occurrence of an animal, and by this logic it should be possible to link La Fontaine's fables with totemism. In short, the more one tests the anthropological theory the more unsatisfactory it becomes. What can safely be said is simply that a limited number of motives is current among savages, though usually not combined into tale-types; that certain others present an outlook which is not ordinarily met with in highly civilized societies and institutions (e.g. barbarous modes of punishment) which have, in Europe at least, become obsolete since the French Revolution and the reforms inaugurated by the writings of Jeremy Bentham. Yet in most other respects our fairy tales presuppose a fairly developed civilization and a social organization anything but ‘ primitive ’, and the conspicuous lack of fairy tales noted among the Negroes of Central Africa, the natives of the Australian continent and the North American Indians certainly does not exactly bear out the contentions of the Anthropological School.

Bédier's book, rather negative in character, did not make many converts from Benfey's Indianist theory. Yet it caused a wholesome heart-searching among Benfey's adherents and induced them to defend their case by sounder arguments. Naturally enough, the application of such stricter methods began in France with Benfey's foremost French disciples, Gaston Paris [16] and Emmanuel Cosquin.[17]

In the migration of tales from the Orient to the Occident Benfey saw a purely mediaeval phenomenon, attributing the rôle of mediators to Islam and the Mongols. In 1912 Cosquin proved that he had considerably over-estimated the part played by the latter.[18] At the time of this writing more and more evidence is being accumulated to show that the migration of tales is not peculiar to the Middle Ages, nor, in fact, to any other period, but has taken place at all times.[19]

While in Western and Central Europe the debate between the different schools was going on, a new system of research had been evolved in Finland, growing out of the Kalevala studies of Julius Krohn and continued by his son Dr. Kaarle Krohn and Dr. Antti Aarne. The ‘ geographic-historical ’ method,[20] as it has been called, implies, in the first place, a very careful comparison of all existing oral versions of a given type with due regard to their geographical distribution, based upon a minute analysis of the variants. This leads to the reconstruction of the ‘ norm ’, i.e. the form from which all oral variants are ultimately derived. This norm is then compared with the historical variants, which, by a careful weighing of the evidence, leads to the reconstruction of the archetype and its approximate place and date of origin. At the time of this writing there exist more than a dozen monographs, each dealing with a definite type. Most have furnished acceptable results and, though their authors were certainly not biased in favour of Benfey's theory, have most strikingly confirmed that scholar's intuitive view.

The chief objection raised so far to the Finnish method centres in the proper evaluation of the historical variants.[21] The position of the Finnish scholars may be summed up as follows. An historical variant never owes its existence to the writer's desire to transmit, as faithfully as possible, an oral tale current among the people. On the contrary, there is always some literary tendency clearly discernible, some purpose on the part of the writer, however laudable from the aesthetic or moral point of view, yet utterly foreign to the interests of our science. Alterations and modifications must therefore be taken for granted in those historical variants and, this being the case, the importance of the reconstructed norm looms rather large. The opponents of this view affirm that the historical variants deserve greater belief than the norm, constructed as it is from very recent variants.

It is difficult to state, in a general manner and as a principle as it were, which of the two views is the juster, the more so because the factor interfering with the dependability of the historical variants is far from constant. In other words, the proper evaluation of each historical variant will vary from case to case, and no definite principle can be laid down.

Neither the Indianist theory of Benfey nor its modern descendants attempted to answer the question of the origin of fairy tales. Their task may be said to end with the reconstruction of the archetype and the finding of its place and date of origin. The adherents of the Aryan theory were in due time led *ad absurdum* by Adalbert Kuhn and F. L. W. Schwartz in Germany and by Max Müller in England; the lunar and astral mythologists that followed in their wake discredited the whole theory even more, if that was possible.

Under these circumstances it is certainly excusable to take a common-sense view and to regard the fairy tale as a definite type of popular fiction, primarily designed to please and to entertain. At least such is its scope at the present time and such it has been, as is generally conceded, during the whole span of man's historical existence, that is, during the last 6,000 years or so. Certainly, if it be claimed that the opposite is true and that originally fairy tales served an ulterior purpose, the burden of proof plainly lies with those who advocate such an hypothesis. The lack of foundation for the claims of the Anthropological School has been pointed out above, though it may of course be frankly admitted that in the composition of a type motives were used which may be justly regarded as survivals from a previous stage of human thought or which had then been current for a considerable time.

There is yet, however, a certain element present in most fairy tales which would require, it might seem, some consideration, especially in its relation to laws underlying all psychic processes: I refer, of course, to the supernatural element. A number of the motives falling under this heading might indeed be plausibly explained on the basis furnished by the Anthropological School. For example, if in a certain type two brothers part after planting two trees that will wither if any misfortune befall the brothers, this episode owes its existence to the widespread belief in 'life-trees',[22] a belief which, by the way, is hardly found among savages but on the contrary presupposes a certain cultural development (it is met with most commonly in India). Yet there are other marvellous episodes which do not allow of such a comparatively easy explanation. For example, there exists the motive of a man being taken to fairy-land (I use the Irish version;[23] in a Mohammedan it is the Prophet's paradise), where he undergoes a series of adventures. He is finally taken back to the place whence he started on his marvellous journey, only to find that just a few minutes have elapsed since his departure. No theory of survival or revival will account for this motive (the supernatural lapse of all sense of time); but it has been pointed out that the consumption of certain drugs, notably hashish, will produce dreams or hallucinations of precisely this nature.[24]

To show how hazardous it is to generalize in such matters, let us discuss briefly the opposite motive, which occurs in a vastly greater number of variants. The hero is taken to fairy-land, where he spends, as he thinks, only a brief time. Seized with a sudden homesickness, he communicates to the fairy his desire to return home, when much to his astonishment he is informed that several centuries have passed.[25] It would be vain to hold dreams responsible for this motive, since no such dreams are known. Nor will it do to see in the second group only the working of analogy, the theory being that it was invented after the example of the first group; for the disproportion, in the number of variants, between the two is far too great. In all probability the tale is but an exemplification of the well-known human experience, all too common, alas, that the few days of heavenly bliss which are allotted to us will pass faster than we desire or realize.

Another story, likewise Oriental, has undoubtedly its origin in dream experience. I refer to the third calender's story in the *Arabian Nights*.[26] The hero is taken to a land of bliss by a bird. He opens a forbidden door and is carried back by the same bird, which, to make matters worse, deprives him of an eye. This story, exception being made for the improvement wrought, no doubt, by a *littérateur*, represents most realistically the feeling of mental depression with which we wake up, after certain dreams, to find ourselves again in a hard and prosaic work-a-day world.

A fairly common motive which has been attributed to dream experience by the German scholar L. Laistner [27] is that of the fatal questions, familiar to all of us from the legend of Oedipus but occurring all over Europe. The dream in question is properly speaking a nightmare of a type which is not particularly rare nowadays but which must have been far more common in former times when the ordinary ideas about the proper airing of houses and bedrooms were non-existent. In an Icelandic story a newly-wed wife is actually told in a dream that unless she can answer three questions put to her by her husband the latter will kill her.[28] There is finally a curious set of redemption stories in which the hero has to undergo three nights of torture or has to carry the heroine up a hill but breaks down without having accomplished the task, both types betraying all too clearly the purely subjective experience of a nightmare.

On the basis of the dream theory an attempt has been made to explain, quite needlessly, I believe, the apparent inactivity of the heroes of fairy tales.[29] This inactivity, it should be said, is only apparent, for if in a number of types the chief task is accomplished by a supernatural helper, the hero had to acquire that helper's friendship in the first place. This supposed inactivity is to be explained more easily by the tendency, quite outstanding in all popular fiction, to skip the details and to glorify the hero by having him overcome obstacles without much effort, in the *veni vidi vici* manner.

An element which must not be neglected in this connexion is the didactic. It was the fashion, especially toward the middle of the nineteenth century when the Art for Art's Sake idea was ruling men's minds, to deny the existence of this element in fairy tales and, since its prominent place in a collection such as *Les Contes de ma Mère l'Oye* could not very well be overlooked, to heap abuse on the head of poor old Perrault. Yet such an attitude is altogether unjustified since even tales collected among savages show this didactic element quite strongly developed. It would be foolish, of course, to proclaim that all fairy tales are of didactic origin and pursue a moral purpose. Yet that a large number owe certain motives or their whole structure to purely didactic considerations can admit of no doubt.

There is, for example, the widespread motive of the forbidden door or the chest which must not be opened, motives familiar to all readers from the stories of *Blue-Beard* and of *Cupid and Psyche*. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that it has served for centuries to drive home the useful lesson that intellectual curiosity is sometimes out of place. Very striking, too, is a certain dualism quite prominent in a number of tales. In one type we will hear of two girls, one of them good, kind-hearted, charitable, and hard-working into the bargain, whilst the other displays only the corresponding vices Or we will hear of two brothers of similarly opposite characters and temperaments. It is difficult not to gain an impression that this accentuated dualism, like the religion of Ancient Iran, was principally designed as a moral vehicle.

There remain to be discussed two more theories attempting to explain the origin of the fairy tale, to wit, the so-called ritualist theory of P. Saintyves [30] and the hallucinations of the psycho-analytic school of Vienna. The French scholar's attempt to derive certain types from ancient ritual, initiation ceremonies and processions, has met with a partial success. Certain motives of the Cinderella tale, for example, bear a curious resemblance to some of the *dromena* we hear of in connexion with the Babylonian Sacaea festival. But the ritualist theory cannot hope to explain the origin of even a majority of, let alone all, known types. The psycho-analytic mode of approach may be discussed even more briefly. The very premises put forward by that school, the existence of various ' complexes ', operative, in their view, during infancy and childhood, being unproven, the deductions therefrom would be quite untenable even if their logic were faultless. As a matter of fact, it is anything but that.[31]

We may say, then, at least until proofs to the opposite be forthcoming, that the fairy tale is a type of early popular fiction, like modern literary fiction drawing its materials from various sources, usually in the form of motives. Some of these motives are fairly realistic, whilst others are plainly survivals, i.e., representing forms of early belief, generally of an age-long past when the type was composed. Still others are elaborations of dream fancies.

It may be pertinent, next, to inquire how long, granting the essential correctness of a migration of types in a westerly direction, our modern fairy tales have been current in Europe. It is clear at once that each type requires a special treatment and a special answer. Generally speaking, however, it may be said that a *terminus ante quem* is furnished by the oldest European historical variant. Now it is quite a noteworthy fact that the historical variants of most current types lead us back into the Middle Ages, whilst the existence of still others is attested in the Mediterranean countries in classical antiquity.[32]

A few examples will illustrate this. The story of the boy who understood the languages of animals and was elected pope is a mediaeval tale going back to the thirteenth century, being originally attached to the Alsatian pope Leo IX (1049–1054), who was canonized after his death.[33] The *Swan-maiden type*, i.e. the story of the fairy wife who deserts her husband upon the breaking of a taboo, has been proved to be of Indian origin.[34] It does not make its appearance in Western Europe before the ninth century, the oldest historical variant being an Eddic song. The story of the *Dog Gelert* owes its existence in Wales to the reworking in French of an Oriental compilation, the *Book of Sindibâd*, which did not reach Western Europe much before the middle of the twelfth century.[35] The oldest historical variant of the story *Vaticinium* is the Biblical episode of Joseph and his brothers, going back, no doubt, to the second millennium before Christ. But even this story is only a literary modification of an archetype older still, in which the father, offended by his son's dream, ordered him to be killed, but was deceived by a faithful servant.[36] The story of Iason and Medeia is but a literary version, the oldest known, of the type of the *Quest of the Princess with the Golden Hair*.[37] The Polyphemus episode of the *Odyssey* is the oldest historical variant of a widespread story the norm of which, as reconstructed from the oral versions, shows a number of features absent from Homer's text but undoubtedly present in the lost archetype.[38] A similar state of facts obtains for the story of Kirke.[39] The myth of Perseus constitutes the oldest historical variant of the *Tale of the Twin-Brothers*.[40] Thus it will be readily seen that there is no exaggeration in the statement that the fairy tale is a fairly old type of fiction, certainly older than the epic.

What are the general characteristics of this type, what are the features which may in justice be ascribed to all fairy tales and which thus distinguish them from other types of popular fiction? First of all, the fairy tale is essentially melodramatic in tone and character. Its protagonists are types and few in number: the hero (or heroine), the kindly helper or helpers, and the villain or villains.

As a rule there is only one hero. The exceptions are few and far between, one being the above-mentioned Tale of the Twin-Brothers, another that of the Four Skilful Brothers. Yet even when there are several heroes their distinguishing marks are practically nil. Thus in the Tale of the Twin-Brothers it is expressly stated that in their physical appearance the two brothers are so much alike as to be indistinguishable, and in the other example adduced the protagonists are quite alike, except that each possesses one marvellous quality which the others lack.

The typical fairy tale hero is essentially the hero of a melodrama in that he possesses whatever virtues one may wish for, whilst no mention is made of possible flaws. Nor is there any evolution of character discernible in most fairy tales. The hero is supremely good or clever at the outset and obviously remains so till the end. Again there are but few exceptions to this rule, and these owe their origin no doubt to the tendency of didacticism discussed above. Thus, for example, in the tale of the *Golden Bird* the hero repeatedly disregards the advice of his kind helper and gets into trouble in consequence. Only on the last quest does he mend his ways and attain his goal. In the *Märchen* at the base of the ancient story of *Cupid and Psyche* the heroine twice violates the taboo and opens a forbidden box; at last she manages to resist her fatal curiosity.

The makers of fairy tales, however simple their art, were yet quite aware of the advantage of foils to make the hero's or heroine's excellence of character or beauty stand out more clearly. Thus in a number of types the hero will have two numskull brothers and the heroine will be provided with one or two envious sisters, anything but models of beauty. Often, too, these brothers or sisters will attempt the task and fail miserably, whilst the hero or heroine carries it to a successful conclusion.

The melodramatic character of the fairy tale comes out very clearly in the description that is usually given of the general conditions of the hero or heroine at the outset of his or her career. They are said to find themselves in a truly miserable state. The hero is usually the youngest son, scorned and neglected by everybody around him, whilst the heroine is often ill-treated by a wicked stepmother or stepsisters. In a large number of types the hero is an orphan outright or else a 'widow's son', the loss of the father evidently being considered as more serious than the loss of the mother.[41] In certain types he is even depicted as a dunce whose intellect is slow in awakening. The typical hero of fairy tales may therefore be truly considered as a 'self-made man', a type which has been to this day the favourite hero of melodrama.

Nor is there anything primitive about the virtues possessed by the hero and therefore evidently meant to be inculcated. The chief of these is of course courage. Next come cleverness (sometimes of the Ulyssean kind), presence of mind, but also generosity, willingness to listen to good advice, kindliness and common decency. In the heroine courage naturally falls somewhat into the background, but the other virtues remain much the same. All these are qualities which have always been prized and presumably will continue to be for centuries to come. That there are occasional traits of savagery need not be denied, and a few words on the subject will prove helpful.

In the Polyphemus type we have a plain example of cannibalism, and the hero betrays a ruthlessness in dealing with his foe which, however justified under the circumstances, would yet make us a little hesitant about receiving him in our company. Now the tale is quite old, as evidenced by the Homeric version, and there can be little doubt that the Mediterraneans had but to cross the strait of Gibraltar or the Bosphorus to find themselves among tribes practising cannibalism. There is then truly no need to trace this story back into glacial times. In certain variants of another type, the *Juniper tree*, a stepmother kills her stepson by making him look into a chest and then letting the heavy lid fall upon him. The episode can be understood, of course, only if one has seen these chests, used throughout the Middle Ages and generally made of oak-wood. This fact alone would settle the probable date of the origin of the episode. In this case we are, however, in the exceptional position of being able to adduce more direct evidence. The Frankish historian Gregory of Tours, who wrote in the seventh century, relates how a Frankish king, in fact, Clovis himself, slays his cousin in a somewhat similar fashion.[42] Then we have the story of the king who, as Giambattista Basile expresses it, wants to become his own son-in-law. The earliest historical variant is mediaeval, but the anthropologists have drawn all sorts of unwarranted conclusions about the hoary antiquity of this type. To these fancies it should be observed (1) that this type of incestuous marriage is not known to exist or to have ever existed even among the most backward savages; (2) that it did exist in Persia in historical times, i.e., before the Islamic conquest, where it was, however, recommended as a meritorious deed by the Zoroastrian system of religion; (3) that a similar episode occurs in Emile Zola's novel *Fécondité*, with the difference that there the father not only wishes to become his son-in-law but actually succeeds; and (4) that all existing variants of the fairy tale (which may be conveniently consulted in Miss Cox's *Cinderella*)[43] bear the earmarks of mediaevalism, a good number of them expressly mentioning the genial tolerance of the clergy toward His Majesty's novel proposal, a cynicism one does not often find in fairy tales. If we bear in mind the general attitude of mediaeval public opinion toward its spiritual advisers and the peculiar fondness of this age for incest stories, a fondness largely due to the prevalence given to the idea of 'prohibited degrees', the conclusion is obvious that this tale is a typically mediaeval product.[44] To these considerations there must finally be added still another. In an overwhelming majority of the variants hailing from every possible part of the Old World there occurs the heroine's cosmic dress, i.e. a robe having for a pattern the earth with its animals and birds, the sea with its fishes, or the sky with the starry host. The idea of the cosmic dress goes back to the Mesopotamian dignity of the *kosmokrator* and spread over Mediaeval Europe through Byzantium. The archetype of the fairy tale in question must then have arisen in a world as remote from savagery and barbarism as Ancient Babylon or Mediaeval Byzantium and Rome.[45]

With all his virtues, however, the hero would hardly succeed in his task if it were not for kind helpers, sometimes simply helpful animals, more often helpers of a supernatural kind. It is true, he does not obtain their assistance without any personal merit. As a rule, he wins their friendship by some kind or charitable deed, sometimes merely by a courteous answer, whilst his brothers, rude and unkind, not only obtain no help but often see themselves frustrated by those very powers they have offended. In isolated cases, for example in *Puss in Boots*, the hero wins the friendship of his animal helper without any meritorious deed of his own. In a well-known type he acquires the good will of three animals by dividing between them a piece of booty to which they lay claim.

The helpful animal is often one of the flock which the hero or the heroine have to pasture, a ram, a bull, or even a horse. Such is the case in the type which underlies the story of Phrixos and Helle.[46] In the widespread tale of the magic ring, at the basis of the Oriental story of Aladdin, the helpful animals are a snake, credited with having furnished the ring (for reasons which we shall discuss further on), a dog and a cat. The beast may be a wild animal, a fox or a wolf, sometimes even a lion. The animal is endowed with speech, not necessarily because at the time when those types arose man believed animals on much the same level with himself, actuated by human desires and human passions, but more probably because without such a fiction no story is possible in which animals play any conspicuous rôle. In a number of types and of variants of types the animal helper in the end turns out to be a metamorphosed human being, and it may occur to some that such was the case in all stories in which an animal helper occurs. This conclusion would be hardly warranted, however. For not only is the number of versions 'improved' by a metamorphosis motive relatively small, but it would be rather difficult, moreover, to see why this motive, quite interesting in itself, should have been dropped. On the other hand, it is clear that as a rationalizing feature, to make plausible the animal's anthropomorphism, it should have been added by sophisticated narrators.

The Anthropological School, naturally enough, could not help connecting the figure of the animal helper with the totemic system, whilst the Indianist School of Benfey saw in it a reflex of the well-known Buddhistic attitude toward all animal life. Of the two theories the latter is somewhat less absurd than the former, and the tale of the magic ring, in which the hero charitably rescues a snake, a dog and a cat from torment and death, is indeed of Indian origin. Yet such a far-reaching conclusion from an isolated fact is altogether too bold,[47] and it is after all a satisfaction to know that the Anglo-Saxon attitude toward animals as expressed by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is not the direct outcome of the British rule in India, though an historian of the year A.D. 3000 may possibly be led to see some connexion between the two facts. Considering how common gross cruelty to animals is in India, Brahmin views notwithstanding, one can get a fairly good idea of the general accuracy and correctness of such a conclusion.

In a large number of fairy tales the helper is clearly of the supernatural variety. The most curious of these is probably the figure of the *Grateful Dead*.[48] The general outline of this type may be given as follows:

> The hero, at the outset of his career, finds the unburied body of a man, who is sometimes ill-treated because he had died insolvent. Though poor himself, he gives his last money to defray the burial expenses, or to pay the debt, or both. Shortly after, he meets with a man, who becomes his travelling companion, aids him in the accomplishment of a difficult task, or saves his life, and at the end makes himself known to him as the very man whose corpse he had so kindly treated.

This tale may combine with various others, since the task put to the hero may naturally vary in different types. The earliest historical variants lead us back into the pre-Christian era, a story in Cicero and the *Book of Tobit*. As stated in its most general form, the burial given to a corpse and the dead man's gratitude, the tale may have originated almost anywhere; in fact, we have here an isolated case to which the theory of polygenesis may be applied without serious risk. When the motive of the dead man's insolvency is added, the tale is immediately lifted into a fairly civilized environment, whilst the cruelties inflicted upon the corpse would presuppose a state of public morals antedating the legislations of Solon and the Twelve Tables. However, when combined with a series of other motives so as to form an organic whole, the story has a definite origin in a definite country and in a definite time, to be ascertained, for each combination, by the historic-geographical method.

In at least one type, the story of the Earthman, the helper, a dwarf, sometimes a witch, has to be overcome by the hero first and thereafter, having received quarter at his hands, helps him in his further enterprises.

In still other cases the help afforded him is as involuntary. The hero, that is, overhears animals or supernatural beings, usually of a demonic character, and acts on the information thus received. The motive, quite popular in India, cannot therefore be claimed to be of Indian origin. In fact, it may well have arisen quite independently in different places.[49] There is, however, a story incident in which the information thus received turns out to lead to the undoing of the animal which gave it. It is very common in India and relatively rare in the rest of the Old World, and there can therefore be little doubt about its Indian origin.[50]

Sometimes the part of the animal helper is taken by inanimate objects. The hero or heroine will be asked by a tree to shake down its fruit and after doing so will be rewarded, usually by the grateful tree's refusing to give information to the pursuing witch. On the other hand, the bad brother or sister, who neglects to comply with the request of the tree, will enjoy no such protection and therefore come to an evil end. The propitiation of certain objects in the witch's household or near her abode is therefore often one of the preliminary tasks which must be accomplished by the hero or heroine.

The part played by the helpers in the accomplishment of the task varies greatly. In a number of types they merely place at the hero's disposal their superior knowledge, limiting themselves to the giving of advice, whilst in others it is they who accomplish the major and most difficult portion of the task if not the task itself. It is therefore incorrect to emphasize the hero's inactivity as a general feature of fairy tales.

In a fairly large group of types the hero has no helper at all, but is given some marvellous object which greatly facilitates his task or which alone make its accomplishment possible. Thus in the type of the *Quest of the Princess with the Golden Hair* the hero is given a magic horse or a magic ship (the Argo in the Greek literary version). In another type it is a magical instrument [51] of which

> The like was never known,
> So full of mirth and mickle joy
> That whensoe'er it's blown
> All living creatures that shall hear
> The sweet and pleasant sound
> Shall not be able to forbear
> But dance and skip around.

Or it may be merely one of those pieces of bric-à-brac so common in fairy tales, a magic ring, a cap or cloak of invisibility, an inexhaustible money-bag, a magic carpet, or the like. Again the hero is not usually given these objects for nothing. Iason, it will be remembered, obtained the Argo in consequence of his kindness to Hera, whom in the shape of a decrepit old woman he had carried across a flooded river. Replace Hera by an old fairy wishing to test mortals and the Argo by a magic horse, and we are in the realm of the fairy tale.

In a number of types the hero obtains the marvellous objects by a genuinely Ulyssean prank. Coming upon their owners quarrelling over the division, he offers his mediation but affirms that he has to test the objects first. The owners, evidently not blessed with a particularly high intelligence, hand the objects over to him, and he makes off with them as quickly as possible. As an afterthought certain variants add that after the accomplishment of his task the hero has nothing better to do than to render those objects to their rightful owners. The spurious nature of this motive is as evident as is the moral purpose for which it was added. Like certain biographers, the narrators of these variants were anxious to remove from their hero even the slightest stain or blemish implied by any of his actions.

Like every good melodrama, the fairy tale has its villain or villains. These villains may by their position to the hero be classed under two headings. They may be near—though to be sure hardly dear—to him, or they may be entirely unconnected with him until his tasks bring him in contact with them. To the former belongs the array of hateful uncles, ugly stepmothers, envious brothers or sisters or stepbrothers and stepsisters, treacherous companions and, in one isolated type at least, an unnatural mother. Among the latter must be counted the medley crowd of giants, dragons, ogres, *revenants*, witches, sorcerers, and magicians found in most types.

The former class needs on the whole little comment. The realism underlying the stepmother, stepbrother and stepsister conceptions is of course evident. The occurrence of envious brothers and sisters is to be explained on the basis of the 'foil' idea, the object being to make the character of the hero or heroine stand out still clearer. The figures of the hero's unnatural sister or mother, occurring in just one type,[52] are most probably due to a transfer, their rôle being originally taken by a wife whom the hero had captured against her will (the famous Samson motive).[53] But the whole type has not yet been subjected to a thorough study. Nor does the figure of the cruel uncle require any special explanation, especially to English readers who will remember King John and King Richard III. Suffice it to say that the figures of this class are genuine villains, as black as fancy can make them, who in the end meet with their deserved punishment. Very much the same holds true for the characters of the second class, except that they are under no natural obligation to the hero but meet him in fair fight, inevitably getting the worst of it. They are throughout endowed with superhuman strength, though their intellectual equipment, fortunately for the hero, is usually not on a par with their physical qualities. The fight between them and the hero is generally a fair one, as has been said before, for their supernatural strength is matched by the hero's nimbleness and wit. In fact, the number of types in which the hero conquers them in a regular duel is probably far exceeded by those in which he prefers to outwit them. Nor is it necessary to cite examples; numbers of tales will occur to the reader at once.

In his task the hero is invariably successful. The opposing demons are defeated, his enemies at home receive their punishment, he marries a princess and lives happy ever after. This happy ending, without which a fairy tale is unthinkable, likewise approximates this type of fiction to the modern melodrama A fairy tale with a tragic ending is unknown, and wherever an historical variant presents such an one, as does, for example, the story of Iason, the folk-tale has undergone a literary re-working.

An apparent exception to this rule is the story of *Godfather Death*[54] as it occurs in the collection of the Brothers Grimm and in a considerable number of other oral versions hailing, chiefly, from Central Europe and Western Russia. The daring physician, it will be recalled, cheats his godfather and is thereupon led by him into a subterranean cavern where he beholds a multitude of lights burning. Upon his question he is told that these represent the lives of men. He is then shown his own, on the point of giving forth its last flicker. In vain does he entreat Death to allot to him a longer span of life; the light goes out, and the unhappy doctor falls down dead at the feet of his godfather. In a French version, undoubtedly of German provenance, he is found dead on the high road on the following morning.

The history of this tale is most interesting. It was known in Mediaeval Europe as far north as Iceland, though in quite a different form. The physician cheats his godfather when the latter comes to take him, usually by making him promise to allow him a last prayer, which he is clever enough not to finish. Death has to have recourse to a ruse in his turn to overcome his wily godson. In this form the story is then clearly a merry tale and as such it survives on the periphery of the European continent. In Central Europe it was crowded out by a new form, the tragic tale we know, which arose in Eastern

Germany, probably in Silesia, shortly after the Thirty Years War, and is of literary, i.e. humanistic, origin. For it incorporated from ancient Greek literature two of its chief incidents, to wit, the physician who saves a patient against the will of the higher powers and has to pay for it with his own life, and the incident of the cavern with the lamps representing the lives of men. The former was taken from a Pindaric ode : it is essentially the story of Asklepios, whilst the latter has its origin in an episode of Lucian's *True History*, the city of Lychnopolis.

In the centre proper of the fairy tale stands the task or tasks, often three in number, of the hero. Their nature varies of course in the different types. One of the most common is the quest motive. Its frequent occurrence alone should have prevented folklorists from seeing in fairy tales much else besides fictions put together to please and to entertain. For there are few themes as engrossing and interesting as a good quest theme well worked out. It is the quest theme which makes stories like those of the Argonauts or the *Odyssey* so vastly more charming than, say, the *Iliad* or the *Nibelungenlied* with their tedious monotony of duels and battles. What the hero goes in quest of again may vary greatly from type to type ; only, since we are dealing with popular fiction, it can be nothing abstract such as Happiness or Love. On the contrary, it is always something very concrete, a woman, the ideal woman, of course, a wonderful horse, a wonderful bird, the water of life, the three golden hairs of the devil, the sword of light, or, maybe, an answer to some puzzling question. Again one fails to see anything particularly primitive about all this. These things are rather such as man has always striven after ; treasure, long life, and the ideal woman. That the treasure should consist of a fine horse or a fine sword merely puts our tales back into the feudal age, which is not exactly prehistoric. After all, almost every genuine hero of that age, from the Frankish Sigfried to the Norse Olaf Tryggvasson, was said to have possessed the most beautiful woman, the swiftest horse, the best sword, and sometimes, in addition, the finest hound and the most excellent ship.

Next in favour among the popular tasks is probably the watch. Again, there is nothing very archaic or hoary about this motive. To be sure, ritual watches have existed for a long time past. There has been the ' wake ' near a corpse, which is by no means always a social affair as in Ireland. The opening chapters of Apuleius' famous story rather incline one to a different view of the matter. There has been, further, the watch as one of the ceremonies of chivalry which all readers of *Don Quixote* will remember, a custom which, by the way, is still kept up in certain regiments of Continental European armies. As we should but expect, after what has been said about the common occurrence of realistic elements in fairy tales, this ritual watch does turn up in certain variants of certain types, usually in the form of a wake undertaken in three successive nights by one of the three sons of the deceased. The two eldest sons are frightened to death, but the youngest son stands the test. Yet this type of watch which can be directly derived from every-day life, stands after all fairly isolated in the literature of fairy tales. Vastly more common is the watch of the homestead under circumstances which make such a watch anything but a desirable experience.

There is first of all the watch of the castle haunted by ghosts which have killed every human being that had attempted the task. The hero, by his conduct, a mixture of intrepidity and caution, lays the spectres, disenchants the castle and obtains a princess in reward. There is further the story called *The Hand and the Child*. For some time past every new-born child in a house has been spirited away by a giant hand coming down through the chimney. The hero cuts off the hand or arm and eventually recovers the abducted children.[55] There is the watch in the chapel near the coffin of the bewitched princess who nightly rises and slays the soldiers sent to guard her, until the hero, cautioned beforehand, follows the right course to remain unhurt and to disenchant the princess. Now stories such as these are clearly told because of the thrill of the adventure involved, and all they presuppose on the part of the hearer's credulity is a belief in ghosts and ' spooks ', to find which it is not necessary to go back into the Stone Age.

Another very common set of tasks is connected with wooing adventures. The hero, to win the bride, has to undergo certain tests, a foot- or chariot-race, a duel with his father-in-law or, if the bride be an Amazon, with the bride herself, or he must come out victorious of a tournament, be able to solve certain riddles, or vanquish his father-in-law at the game of chess. Nor is it necessary to descend to primitive culture to explain these motives. Royal brides, we may be sure, were never bestowed according to the outcome of a prize-fight, and the historical records teach us that even in relatively crude ages such as the Merovingian or the Mycenaean, royal matches were the outcome of diplomacy and statecraft. A king or even a chieftain was not particularly influenced by his prospective son-in-law's proficiency as a boxer or a chess-player, but was actuated by much the same motives as any eighteenth-century or modern royal match-maker. So what happened was simply this. The ordinary man in difficult times when the law was weak (to reach which we do not have to go back more than 500 years) might well inquire closely into his future son-in-law's physical and mental qualities.[56] In fact, he is apt to do so even now, and in a period when competitive sports were generally relished he might even assure himself in the most practical manner of the personal value of the young men that sought the hand of his daughter. There is nothing more natural than that conditions such as these should, in fiction, be transferred to the doings of royalty, and with proportionate magnifications. Once safely within the realm of fiction, the laws of analogy and variation soon brought on quite a multitude of different tests, only few of which may ever have existed in reality. Thus it is natural enough that an Indian monarch should look for a good chess-player, whilst his Icelandic or Irish colleague would be more interested in the boxer. Quite apart from such local variations, as a general rule we may be quite certain that the physical combat always preceded the intellectual in time. In the oldest ascertainable version of the Oedipus story neither the hero nor the Sphinx belonged to the class of intellectuals, but the former simply slew the monster with his club.[57]

In the definition of the term *fairy tale* as given at the outset it was pointed out that it is usually a *serious* narrative. As a matter of fact, the generally serious tone is quite remarkable, and one is more than once inclined to miss the humorous element, no regard being had, of course, for the rather grim humour which often comes out at the end when the villain is made to pronounce his own judgment, which is then promptly carried into effect. However, there exist types which, if the majority approximate to melodrama, would rather represent comedy or even farce. The best example that could be quoted is the type of the *Brave Tailor*, narrating the biography of a man blessed neither with strength nor with courage but shrewd and not without presence of mind. In the Oriental branch of the type with variants ranging from India to the Baltic even the element of shrewdness has been dropped, and the cowardly hero is aided solely by Luck.[58] There is a good deal of humour also in the types centring in the adventures of a 'fool', often enough likewise a 'widow's son'. Even there the story is careful never to approach the tragic, and the foolish hero of a fairy tale of this description, if his adventures bring trouble upon him, as do those of the Knight of la Mancha, yet comes out well in the end, sometimes as a prince, at least as a wealthy man. The second and the third story of the *Pentamerone* illustrate this point. Humour is thus certainly found in fairy tales; wit, in the sense of the French *esprit*, is quite lacking, even in variants hailing from France and Ireland, where one would after all expect to find it. Texts which show flashes of wit inevitably betray the hand of the literary man re-working an older story.

A third and very peculiar type of fairy tale (if it is permissible to thus classify it) is the so-called cumulative story,[59] most familiar to the English reader perhaps through Asbjörnsen's *Hen who went to Dovrefjeld to save the World* or through his *Cock who fell into the Brewing-Vat*, thanks to George Webbe Dasent's masterly translation. Practically all of these tales are by now sunk to the level of nursery rhymes or jingles, but the origin of the *type* must be sought elsewhere (though even then a very wide play must be left to the rôle of analogy). An exhaustive monograph dealing with this class of stories is as yet wanting. Ritual origin (we have curious analogies in the Jewish hunt for the Aphikomen and in the Athenian Bouphonia, for which the knife is finally held responsible) has been repeatedly proposed and as hotly denied. Yet it is impossible to decide the question without further inquiry.

A common feature which the fairy tale shares with the melodrama is the fondness shown for what an American friend of the writer used to call the ' divine thrill '. The ordinary fairy tale visibly likes hair's-breadth escapes and *coups de théâtre*. The hero will inevitably find himself in situations where all hope is apparently lost. Little Red Riding-Hood is in the wolf's stomach, Odysseus is well entrapped in the Cyclops' den, and in the lost archetype of the Kirke episode the hero is metamorphosed. In the story of the *Animal Bridegroom* and of *Nicht Nocht Naething* the hero's wedding with the wrong bride is either in progress or at least impending. Then all of a sudden, when the suspense is greatest, the action shifts and everything is brought to a happy conclusion. The final scene in Perrault's *Blue-Beard* story is also an excellent case in point.

It is from this strictly technical view-point that a certain motive must be considered which has given rise to much speculation on the part of the Anthropological School. The hero has come to the demon's dwelling-place. A charitable woman, the demon's mother, grandmother, wife, or daughter, sometimes his housekeeper or merely a captive, conceals him in the demon's absence. When the latter comes home his first words are

Fe fi fo fum,
I smell the blood of an Englishman,

or something to that effect. Since this sort of a reception has quite died out in this day and age, it has been concluded that the motive goes back to times of savagery, the sense of scent being, as is well known, far better developed among savages than among modern city folk. The inference, however, rests on a slender foundation. For granting that man's scent has been on the decline for the last 2,000 years, a supposition not at all well founded, it stands to reason that the ogre with many other animal characteristics was also given a keen faculty of scent, possessed, as man has always known, by wild animals. This was done all the more readily because the narrator was obviously guided by his predilection for the thrill, but no such thrill could be forthcoming if the ogre merely entered his cave without at all noticing the presence of the hidden stranger. However, as I have said before, it is far from certain that many a villager might not even now be able to scent the presence of a stranger in a comparatively small and stuffy room.

A good deal, and a good deal of nonsense, has been written on the ethical standards revealed in fairy tales. For the nineteenth-century moralists were not slow in discovering that the ordinary fairy tale does not, any more than do the fables of La Fontaine, inculcate the lessons of the Sermon on the Mount. Yet that fact certainly does not warrant a conclusion that fairy tales are survivals representing a set of moral ideas long since overcome. As is well known, modern society is not governed by the lofty principles of the New Testament or even by Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. Moral sentiment still is, and always has been, purely emotional, and modern public opinion clamours for the punishment of the villain. The fairy tale presents precisely this state of affairs : its villains are punished. That this punishment should as a rule be somewhat more atrocious than is allowed by modern legislation is not a matter of surprise. The reform of criminal procedure is after all a very recent event. Nor is it to be wondered at that in his dealings with the demons the hero should display the qualities of a Ulysses rather than those of a Don Quixote. That merely shows that the narrators are people of common sense.

The fairy tale is furthermore quite free from theological speculations of any kind. The Christian divinity is almost as rigorously excluded as are the figures of the Greek and Roman pantheon. If in the fairy tales of the *Arabian Nights* the name of Allah occurs occasionally, that feature must be evaluated on the principle that accounts for the introduction of Hera and Athena in the story of the Argonauts, i.e. literary preoccupations.

To all this the reader may object certain tales in which 'le bon Dieu' or 'der liebe Gott' do occur (usually in French and

South German variants), as do the Virgin, in a number of French and Italian stories (never, so far as I know, in Irish ones), the Devil and some saint, as a rule Saint Peter. Of these figures, that of the Virgin is the least objectionable from the moral point of view. For she practically always appears as a kind helper, just as does Athena in the story of the Argonauts, having taken the place of the good fairy. In the third story of the Grimm collection her rôle is less pleasant ; as a matter of fact, she has here usurped the place originally taken by a vampire, though the ending has been greatly modified. Just as doubtful is the character attributed to the Deity in certain French and German tales. Thus in *Godfather Death* He is bluntly told that he helps the rich and lets the poor starve. And if the Grimms add : ' He (i.e. the hero) said this because he did not know the genuine kindness of God ', this is evidently an afterthought of the pious narrator, if not of Jacob Grimm himself. The rôle of Saint Peter, practically always comical, goes back to the mediaeval merry tale, of which more anon.

Nor is it possible to find, in the ordinary fairy tale, traces of any philosophy, idealistic or other. The only philosophical principle that appears at all (though only in a relatively small number of types) is Fatalism. The youth who goes to fetch the three hairs of the devil is destined from the beginning to become the son-in-law of the king or of the rich merchant who overhears the prophecy and in vain attempts to prevent its realization. The peasant who has misfortune after misfortune is told that he will never be able to change his own ill luck and is advised to make over all his property to his wife, whose luck is excellent. The moment he does so everything prospers with him. The tyrant is told that he will be slain by a son of his only daughter. He strives hard to make impossible the birth of such a son, but Fate proves stronger than human forethought and human power. It would be completely erroneous to ascribe this note of fatalism to Islamic influences. Fatalism has flourished in countries far remote from the Mohammedan East, and several of these fatalistic types are known to be considerably older than Islam.

The treatment of the religious element in fairy tales suggests a brief discussion of the demonology peculiar to this type of popular fiction. Let us say at once that it is completely neutral. It goes without saying that each people will introduce into its variants its own familiar elementary spirits. Thus the same part in a given type will be taken by a fairy in the Celtic, a nightmare or a witch in the Teutonic, a *vila* in the Slavonic variants. Consequently, when a variant migrates from one country to another the names of the demons will be translated into the best corresponding terms of the other language. Where the opposite is noted, that is, where we meet in a story with a figure foreign to the demonology of the country in question, the existence of literary influences may be taken for granted. Thus the occurrence of the vampire in German tales is indicative of Slavonic, that of the troll in Great Britain of Scandinavian, currents. None of these demons ever formed part of a well-organized or well-developed religious system. A few, such as certain household dwarfs or certain trolls or giants, may possibly have enjoyed local cults, yet even such a fact would have no bearing on the part they are made to play in fairy tales. If in a German variant of a certain type (Frau Holle), a goddess of the ancient Teutonic Olympus appears on the scene, this circumstance is simply due to the fact that in the country in which the variant in question was taken down (Hesse) the figure of the ancient goddess was attached to certain localities and had therefore continued alive in the folk-memory. To conclude from such an isolated fact that the story in question is the descendant of an ancient myth would be the worst possible error a folklorist could commit. There is therefore not the slightest connexion between fairy tales and religious systems, elementary or developed. All one can say is that a very ancient and very elementary set of beliefs in supernatural beings furnished the names for the machine of fairy tales, in much the same fashion as that in which classical mythology furnished the machine for Voltaire's *Henriade*.

The demonology can then as a rule be of no help whatever for the tracing of the history of a given type. All it can do is to fix the nationality of a variant. Thus, if one opens a fairy tale collection at random and without looking at the cover and title page and meets with the Baba-Yaga, Rübezahl, or a banshee, one knows immediately that the story in question is a translation from the Russian, the German-Silesian, or the Irish or Anglo-Irish. In fact, if one deliberately set to work to 'neutralize' the demonology, i.e., to replace the distinctive by vaguer terms, it would be impossible, in the majority of all cases, to tell whether the variant in question hails from Russia or from Ireland. For even the mention made of purely human institutions would but rarely furnish a clue. Thus the wicked landlord may occur in an Irish as well as in a Slavonic or Hungarian story. At the most one could say that the existence of polygamy would point to the East—a vague enough term.

Considerations of this nature will naturally lead us to a discussion of the form of fairy tales. The vast majority, to begin with, are told in prose. The exceptions are few and far between. One might mention the tales in verse collected by W. Radloff among the Turkish tribes of Southern Siberia,[60] the Panjab cycle of Raja Rasalu[61] and the fairy tales incorporated in the *Odyssey*. But in all of these cases the transition from folk-tale to epic has already been made. This general fact does not prevent certain verses from being interspersed in a considerable number of types and variants.[62] To conclude from this that formerly the whole tale must have been in verse would be as foolish as to conclude from Shakespeare's occasional use of the rhyme that in a former hypothetical stage of his work he used rhyme throughout. Those verses, though probably not particularly hoary, yet have a certain tenacity. They will even allow of a verse translation when the tale passes from one linguistic group to another. The best example is perhaps the verse found in the story of the *Juniper Tree*, which has become famous in literature since Goethe put it in the mouth of Gretchen in the last act of his *Faust* I. That verse has its parallel not only in French but even in the Gascon *patois*, as may be judged from a comparison of the texts.[63]

Gascon text.	German fairy tale text.	Goethe's text.
Ma Mairāstrŏ Piquo pastrŏ M'a boulit E perboulit Moun païre, Lou lavouraire, M' mantsat E ronségat. Ma surotŏ La Lisotŏ M' plourat E soupirat; Tsous un albre M'a entarrat. Riou tsiou, tsiou, Encaro souï bioŭ.	Mein Mutter, die mich schlacht', Mein Vater, der mich ass, Mein Schwester, de Marlenichen Sucht alle meine Benichen, Bind't sie in ein seiden Tuch, Legts unter den Machandelboom Kywitt! Kywitt! Was vor'n schön Vogel bin ick.	Meine Mutter, die Hur, Die mich umgebracht hat! Mein Vater, der Schelm, Der mich gessen hat! Mein Schwesterlein klein Hub auf die Bein' An einem kühlen Ort; Da ward ich ein schönes Waldvögelein; Fliege fort, fliege fort!

Since the possibility of a literary work of translation is out of the question, one must grant no mean ability to the bilingual individual, presumably some wandering story-teller domiciled near the linguistic frontier.

The quality of the prose of a variant naturally depends upon the narrator. The Grimms, the Norwegian Asbjörnsen, and W. Larminie had excellent informants, yet it would be unfair to leave out of account the rare literary tact of such men as the

Brothers Grimm who not only collected the dying folk-treasures of their nation but in so doing created a literary masterpiece which for the history of the German language is fully on a par with Luther's Bible and has few parallels in other countries. Had they, as is now sometimes demanded by over-zealous folklorists, taken down the tales literally and published them without their tactful and sympathetic re-working, we should no doubt have texts which might here and there allow of better conclusions for the history of a type: yet in that case it is also quite possible that our science would still be sleeping *dans le néant*.[64]

The genuine fairy tale dispenses with a preamble and leads the reader *in medias res*. There are certain almost sacrosanct formulas for the beginning, familiar to all. The end, coming after a logical conclusion, is likewise fairly abrupt and often clothed in fixed formulas.[65] The distribution of the material is well-proportioned throughout. There is a preliminary part, giving the exposition and leading on to the main part, containing as a rule the hero's task. This once accomplished, there is but little matter added before the conclusion, usually the punishment of the villain or villains and the justice done to the victims.

In the technique of the fairy tale the observation of certain customary rules or 'laws' is clearly noticeable. Thus the numbers two or three prevail almost throughout. The number two is connected with the didactic dualism referred to before, or, in one instance, to wit, the *Tale of the Twin-Brothers*, with Dioscurism, a genuine survival, of which more anon. The number three extends not only to the acting characters but also to the incidents. The enchanted castle must be guarded for three nights running. The suitor must answer three questions or solve three riddles, or he must accomplish three tasks. The quester meets three old men who give him information. The giant-killer slays three giants in succession, the returning prince faces three dangers which must be obviated by his loyal servant. The number four is comparatively rare, so is the number seven. The number forty, that is, forty days, is very common in Eastern variants, Greek, Semitic and Slavonic. Three years, three months and three days is a favourite time-limit in fairy tales, so is 'a year and a day'. Both are undoubtedly ancient legal formulas, but not so ancient that the second of the two should not have come down, in English law, to the present day.

Intimately connected with the number three is the gradual intensification of the action, the centre of gravity of which lies on the third as it were. Thus of the three giants to be conquered the third is the most dangerous; of the metal forests crossed by the hero or heroine the third is the most valuable, being of gold, whilst the two previous ones are of copper and silver respectively. Of the three king's daughters the third and youngest is the prettiest, and of the king's sons the third and youngest is the hero.

This consideration leads inevitably to the refutation of another anthropological fancy. It has been argued that if in fairy tales the hero is invariably the youngest son, the reason must be sought in an ancient legal institution by virtue of which the homestead passed to the youngest son (ultimogeniture), a rule of succession found, in mediaeval times, on these very islands. Now, in the first place, the argument is wanting in logic, for granting the existence of ultimogeniture, no man would ever conclude from this that the youngest son got the inheritance because he was ' worth more '. With the same right one might argue that where primogeniture prevails only the eldest son is a hero, whilst his younger brothers are miserable cowards. No Norman would ever have entertained such a notion, and if he had, the facts would soon have taught him better. Moreover, it has been pointed out that the law of ultimogeniture has its root in the very practical reflection that at the death of the head of the family the youngest son would probably and in most cases be in most need of the paternal homestead, whilst his elder brothers have evidently had time enough to look out for themselves. This rule of succession would then presuppose precisely the opposite of what the fairy tales teach us, namely, that the youngest son is anything but a self-reliant and intrepid hero. But the whole theory is as superfluous as it is valueless, for the purely literary technique of shifting the centre of gravity to the end, to the last member of the set, will fully account for the prominence of the youngest son. It is worth noting that this piece of technique is by no means peculiar to the fairy tale; on the contrary, it governs all narrative art.

Of decidedly melodramatic flavour is the general atmosphere revealed in fairy tales. If the world therein is not exactly the best of all possible worlds—for evidently there is poverty and crime—it is yet quite ideal, for the wicked meet with their due punishment, whilst the good and brave, and sometimes even the fools and cowards, invariably come out happily. Above all, there is one decidedly consoling feature to be taken into account, the absence of Death, except for the villains. It is certainly a curious thing to watch the many circumlocutions —for such they are—of Death, and even the *Christian Science Monitor* could not do better. The most common ones are, however, petrification and metamorphosis. Two examples will make this clear. In the well-known type of *Faithful John* the loyal adviser, having been transformed into a statue, can be brought back to life only by being washed with the blood of his master's children. The ugly sacrifice is performed and the children are resuscitated by miracle. The basic idea is of course that of substitution. One life (or even two) must be given in exchange for another. This in turn led to the widespread superstition that blood may cure certain deadly diseases, such as leprosy, to the rites of the taurobolium and criobolium, and it has a good deal to do with the dogma of the redemption, sin evidently being considered as a deadly disease. Thus the petrified John is really the dead John, brought back to life by the quickening power of human blood. The Kirke story is the literary variant of an older type in which the sorceress metamorphosed her lovers. This type again was derived from an Oriental, i.e. Mesopotamian, tale narrating how the mother-goddess (Ishtar) slew her lovers. We have here, as has been pointed out above, a good example for the isolated fact that a fairy tale *is* derived from a myth; but whereas the myth knows the cold and cruel truth of Death, the fairy tale does not, but has recourse to a paraphrase.

The Anthropological School has put forward so insistently the question of survivals in fairy tales and its claims in this connexion have been so often refuted on these pages that the reader is entitled to ask whether in the writer's view the existence of such survivals is to be denied on principle. To this inquiry I shall now turn. Throughout this chapter I have endeavoured to show, with sufficient clearness, it is hoped, that the fairy tale is a type of popular fiction, first and foremost. It is therefore a literary document if we extend the term *literary*, as we well might, to any product of the human mind with artistic pretensions and having for a medium the spoken or written word. This being so, the fairy tale must be approached in the same way as and by the same method with which we approach any literary document, that is, the philological and historical one. This means that we must determine the date and place of its origin and its subsequent history, precisely as has been pointed out above in connexion with the programme of the Finnish school. Now survivals are by no means peculiar to fairy tales; they are equally common in literary documents of the highest artistic standards. Thus Dr. Gilbert Murray, in a masterly study, drew attention to a number of survivals in the Homeric poems,[66] and the present writer has attempted very much the same thing for the Teutonic epic.[67] But they prove absolutely nothing for the date of the epic in which they happen to occur. In the *Argonautica* of Apollonius

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Rhodius, for example, Alkinoos as arbiter decides that if Iason had known Medeia carnally the two should remain together as husband and wife, but if not, that Medeia should be surrendered to the pursuing Kolchians. It would be folly to infer from this episode that Apollonius or even his immediate source were familiar with that rule as current law. It is not even permissible to conclude, without further inquiry, that the roots of the story go back to a period when such a rule was of common application; for an epic poet with antiquarian tastes may deliberately have introduced the episode in question to give his creation an archaic flavour. Again, the example of finger mutilation which is found in the Middle High German *Rabenschlacht*, a poem of the thirteenth century, merely points to the fact that this poem embodied materials going back to a time when that barbarous usage was still dimly remembered as a custom of former times. It is not different with such survivals as are met with in fairy tales. In most cases they assume the form of motives and undoubtedly belonged to the dead past at the time of the composition of the type. I shall take up a few of them.

One of the very few instances where the whole tale hinges on a set of beliefs current in prehistoric times is the *Tale of the Twin-Brothers*,[68] curiously enough not mentioned at all in the writings of the Anthropological School. There are two heroes in this tale, in some variants even three, who are described as twins or triplets. They are conceived by a miracle and resemble one another so closely that it is impossible to distinguish the one from his brother or brothers. They separate, and one of them engages in a dragon fight, alike in this to the twins Herakles, Apollo and the Teutonic Baltram. They fall a-quarrelling, and the one brother slays his companion in a fit of jealousy. All these features are derived from the ancient belief that twins always resemble one another most strikingly (which in reality they very often do not) and that they are apt to quarrel with one another, their contest often enough ending with the death of either or both. This twin superstition has left its marks on the epic literatures of practically all peoples that can boast of such a literature, and survivals are found in the Middle Ages no less frequently than in Antiquity. Still, our type is one of the oldest known; for the classical Perseus legend is but one of its literary offshoots, though, to be sure, it has lost the twin-motive, and it may well have arisen when Dioscurism was still a living force in the Mediterrean countries.

Another survival has been mentioned before in passing: the belief in blood as a healing and quickening force as it comes out clearly in the type of *Faithful John.*[69] The belief in question was once universal and as a survival occurs in mediaeval literature. The emperor Constantine was fabled to have been afflicted with leprosy and to have desired to cure himself by a bath in the warm blood of slaughtered children.[70] The same survival stands pretty much in the centre of the Middle High German poem *Der arme Heinrich*, composed in the twelfth century. Thus the fairy tale referred to need not be of prehistoric provenance; as a matter of fact, in all probability it is not.

There is a certain tale-type describing the persecution a girl has to suffer at the hands of a vampire, a sort of ghoul of the most hideous type.[71] The belief in vampires, i.e. living corpses which leave their graves at night to feed on the living, has been dead in Western Europe (Iceland excepted) for centuries. One might therefore be inclined to attribute to the story in question considerable antiquity. On looking over the variants one cannot help noticing that they are few in number so far as Western Europe is concerned and increase as one goes eastward. Furthermore, in most of the Italian and German texts the vampire has become simply a robber. Thus the inference is justified that the whole type is foreign to Western and the larger part of Central Europe and immigrated into Italy and Germany from the Balkans and Russia, in both of which parts vampirism is still believed in and feared.

In a considerable number of variants belonging to the *Earthman* type already mentioned there occurs the following episode. The hero will come to a country suffering acutely from famine because a dragon has swallowed up all the water (in the more modernised texts he is merely guarding a spring) and will release them only if offered a victim. Here we surprise the composer of fairy tales at his work as it were; for the motive in question, that of the serpent or dragon swallowing and withholding the life-giving element from man or from a whole country, is found isolated, i.e. quite unconnected with the story, all over the globe.[72]

In certain variants of the same type and another related to it (*The Young Giant*) the hero's mother feeds him with her own milk until he is a full-grown man. The episode represents, grotesquely exaggerated, of course, what is still a common custom among the lower orders of European society and the poor whites of the former Slave States of the Union. I have myself known a woman, in the southern part of the State of Missouri, feeding a boy nearly four years old.

The ill-treatment of the corpse in the cycle of the *Grateful*

Dead, as pointed out above, most probably points to a period when the custom, if not actually practised, was at least still clearly remembered.

A fairly common fairy tale incident is the finding of the bride, as a task imposed upon the candidate for marriage. Now it is perfectly true that the episode in question grew out of a marriage custom still found among savage and barbarous races.[73] Yet it would be erroneous to suppose that it is found *only* there. On the contrary, one of the most delightful passages of George Sand's *La Mare au Diable* points to its existence in the Berrichon during the last century.

Very much the same state of affairs obtains for the famous story of the *False Bride*, no doubt derived from a widespread marriage custom which still lingers in the countryside of many European lands. In other words, the mere connexion between a fairy tale and an ancient custom gives no clue as to the date of the tale, unless indeed the custom can be shown to have been extinct long since.

In a large number of variants of the *Andromeda Type* the hero cuts out the tongue or tongues of the monster he has slain, to use them, later on, as a means of identification. The motive harks back to an ancient custom of using the tongue of a slain beast as a trophy,[74] just as in the modern Spanish bull-fight, for example, the ears of the slain bull serve this useful purpose.

Then there is the well-known central motive of the tale of *Tom Tit Tot*, the power of the name. The minute the demon's name is known to his human opponent, his power is gone, a belief at the base of the custom found among many peoples, the Jews and Romans among others, of keeping the name of a tutelary divinity carefully hidden from foreigners lest by chance, by force or by wiles they entice him away from 'his' people. The motive no doubt *is* old, but not so old that it should not be found in historical times and on a relatively high stage of human civilization.

On the other hand, why is it that so little is made of motives, quite as common, which yet anything but confirm the theories of our friends of the Anthropological School? There is, for example, the motive of the cross-roads with a pillar bearing certain inscriptions, usually of a warning nature: 'He who follows this road will surely meet death', etc. The motive not only presupposes the hero's literacy but is found, strangely enough, very frequently in countries which up to very recent times could not boast of high educational standards, in Russia, for example. Here we are obviously dealing with a migratory motive. Yet what is just for one class of motives is fair to the other, and the possibility of certain ' savage ' motives having occasionally migrated to peoples of a higher civilization must at least be taken into consideration.

The number of the examples cited for survivals in fairy tales might possibly be slightly increased, without, however, materially altering the general picture. Nor is it possible, with the present state of our knowledge, to determine the exact percentage of such survivals in the sum total of all known motives. That task cannot be undertaken until a definite list of all motives is at the disposal of the investigator.

On the other hand, it is but fair to look at the other side of the balance-sheet. What survivals might we legitimately expect to meet in fairy tales, granting that they are sufficiently old, as old as the Anthropological School imagines, at all events, and yet do not find ? A list of them would vastly outnumber the motives justly and unjustly treated as survivals by that school. Suffice it to mention a few. There is no trace of the system of blood-revenge and the blood-fine, no trace of marriage by capture, except in the isolated example of *Faithful John*, certainly not older than the *Solomon Legend* where the same sort of abduction occurs, no trace of the blood-covenant, except again in a few variants of *Faithful John*, no trace of the slaying of female infants, no trace of the slaying of aged parents, no trace of poisonous arrows, no trace of cannibalism, no trace of the cremation of corpses, no trace of human sacrifice, no trace of ordeals—in short, no traces of anything that students of social anthropology justly connect with savagery or even barbarism. If it is remembered at the same time that all, or nearly all, of these things have left their mark on local, cult- and migratory legends, on folk-song and ballad, one is inevitably driven to the conclusion that the fairy tale never saw those stages of human development, or, better said, those stages did not see the fairy tale, for the excellent reason that it is a far later product. In other words, we reach here the conclusion to which we came after glancing over the nature of the human institutions revealed in fairy tales ; namely, that this type presupposes not only a civilized but even a highly civilized, I am almost tempted to say a sophisticated, society. One can imagine Crete, Egypt and Mesopotamia as the countries of their origin : one cannot think of Kamtchatka, Minnesota, or the Solomon Islands. The fairy tale is then most probably the youngest of the different types of popular fiction, and if it is put at the head of treatises on folk-lore (a custom I have followed in this book) the reason is that from an artistic and literary view-point the fairy tale is probably the most perfect creation of the popular, i.e. non-literary, genius.

If this is so, the patient reader will ask, why have not fairy tales, that is *new* types, arisen to this day? The answer is that they have indeed and are still doing so and will in all probability do so for some time to come. The story of Little Red Riding-Hood seems to be an invention of Perrault: at least no earlier variants are known, and the other French and Central European variants, not very many, to be sure, in all, show the unmistakable influence of the classical French text.[75] The story of *Puss in Boots* would not exist either in England or in Germany without Perrault's *Chat Botté*, and the very powerful influence of the Perrault versions is clearly visible in many oral versions collected in Central Europe in the nineteenth century.

To give older and English examples, there is the story, well known to English readers, of Childe Rowland, with the famous verse

> Childe Rowland to the dark tower came, etc.

This story is a typical product of the English Middle Ages. As in the case of the *Beowulf*, the rudimentary plot, the banal story of a girl being abducted by trolls and rescued by one of her brothers, no doubt a sub-type of the *Blue-Beard Cycle*,[76] was carried to Britain from Scandinavia, where it is found to this day. With this story was fused an Irish saga, as may be judged from the following incidents unknown in Scandinavia: (1) the girl *vanishes* upon making the circuit of a church *withershins*, just as in the Celtic lay *Sir Orfeo* the queen all of a sudden vanishes; (2) before setting out on the quest the rescuing brothers carefully collect information from a wizard as to what has become of their sister (in the genuine and as it were unadulterated fairy tale the quester always sets out trusting to his good luck), and (3) the two herdsmen and the henwife met by the hero in the Lower World find their parallel in the typically Celtic motive of the giant herdsman encountered by the hero immediately on his arrival in fairy land. To this hybrid fairy tale were superadded the names of the enchanter Merlin of Arthurian memories and of the French epic hero Roland, who has become here, as elsewhere in the later Middle Ages, a giant and a sort of ogre. As I have indicated, it would be difficult to find a product more typically British than this story to which all the races of the island have contributed their share.

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* has given rise to a genuine fairy tale collected in a number of variants in Gascony during the Second

Empire.[77] Evidently a performance of the play in the Dumas translation had spread the plot among the population of that region. Similarly, performances of *King Lear* both in France and Italy profoundly modified the local variants (in Gascony and Corsica) of the *Cap o' rushes* type.[78] When a schoolboy in Central Europe, the present writer heard a tale that sounded like a biography of Joan of Arc, all names being omitted, of course, and the heroine herself appearing as a ' white witch ', i.e. a person using magical means for a good purpose. The example of *Godfather Death*, a seventeenth-century tale, has been quoted above. Many of Wilhelm Hauff's fairy stories have become quite popular in Germany ; and if the same thing did not happen to the *Kunstmärchen* of other writers such as Hans Christian Andersen, the reason is that they indulged in more sentimentality and didacticism than ordinary people can stomach.

Another question, equally interesting, is to determine whether the known types of fairy tales represent the sum total of the output of fairy tales, at least so far as this planet is concerned. The answer is that we do not know and shall never know. Many civilizations have passed without leaving traces, literary traces, that is, and it may be taken for granted that not all the fairy tales current in Ancient Egypt were put down in writing as were those published by Maspéro, nor can we suppose that all Egyptian tales migrated to other countries. Finally, of the Maya and Inca civilizations we do not know the literature, to say nothing of their folk-lore. That stories may die out in a given country admits of no doubt. Svend Grundtvig's manuscript material contains types not recorded in Central and Western Europe. Now we know that Denmark originated but few fairy tales and served rather as a bridge between Germany and Scandinavia. We are therefore forced to conclude that most, if not all, of those types were once known in Central Europe but had died out before the systematic collecting began in the nineteenth century. The same observation holds true for scores of types recorded in the Baltic States and Russia, but completely unknown in the rest of Europe.

A few words should be said about what is known concerning the diffusion of fairy tales. Roughly speaking, one may distinguish two modes of diffusion, namely, by land and by sea. If a tale originated, as we must assume, in a definite spot of our globe, and the diffusion took place on land, it seems to have spread in all directions in the manner of the circles one observes when a stone is thrown into the water. Linguistic barriers formed no obstacle whatever, not even to the verses inserted in fairy tales, as was pointed out above. It is a natural inference, inasmuch as oral transmission tends to alter and modify a tale, that the number of alterations increase in direct proportion with the distance travelled from the country of the origin. This observation is generally borne out by the facts. The vampire stories of the European East become, as they travel westward, more and more 'neutral', more and more 'washed out', until even the vampire is replaced by an indifferent robber. Sometimes it also happens that in the course of its diffusion a given tale is improved upon, in a certain country not necessarily identical with the country of its origin and that the improved version crowds out the older ones. Then it may happen that the latter disappear everywhere except in the very periphery of the territory covered by the tale, for the excellent reason that this periphery has not yet been reached by the newer form. That is the case for *Godfather Death*, whose older form is preserved in the outlying countries of the European continent such as Iceland, Portugal and Italy, whilst in Central and partly also in Eastern Europe the new form, dating, as we have seen, from the seventeenth century, prevails.

If the migration took place by sea, a variant from a far distant country whither a tale has been carried directly, may resemble the original version more than any or most of the variants resultant from a diffusion over land. Thus the Kirke episode of the *Odyssey* was transmitted to India directly from Greece, with the result that the Ceylonese variant of that story is far closer to the Homeric texts than any of the other known variants, written or oral.[79] Again, there is an Indian story telling of a captive prince (or, in one group of texts, a princess) alternatively put to sleep and awakened by a demon and redeemed by a person of the opposite sex. This tale is current in India, the Balkans, North Africa and Iceland; but the Icelandic variants stand far closer to the Indian texts than to the others. The reason is that the type was introduced into Iceland directly from India during the time of the Danish trade monopoly, which roughly coincides with the bloom of the Danish missions in India.[80]

Nor is it impossible for a tale to migrate twice in the same direction, though under different forms. Thus the motive of the *Poison Damsel*, of Indian provenance, drifted to prehistoric Crete where it became attached to a man, the legendary king Minos. In the Renaissance and after the Portuguese discoveries it became again known in Europe and entered Samuel Butler's *Hudibras*. Some time between these extreme points the motive had entered Europe in its usual form, i.e. as attached to a girl, in connexion with the legends centring in Alexander and

Aristotle.[81] The Indian story of the *Weaver who impersonates the god Vishnu* had first come to Europe after Alexander's Indian campaign, being reproduced, though in a much altered form, by the Alexandrian geographer Mnaseas. In the early Middle Ages it again wandered west, in a different form, and became known in the Occident as the story *Roma* of the *Seven Sages of Rome*. Next it went west, in literary form, as a part of the *Arabian Nights*, and last of all the Indian forms themselves became known with the translation of certain *Panchatantra* and other literary Indian texts.[82] It would be difficult to find better examples to show how unjustified M. Bédier's scepticism was when applied to the diffusion of fairy tales. As opposed to the vague methods of Benfey and his immediate successors it served a useful purpose, but to the study of the subject in general it has probably done more harm than good.

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[1] Krohn, *Die folkloristische Arbeitsmethode*. For a list of types, cf. A. Aarne, *Verzeichnis der Märchentypen*, Helsingfors, 1910 (*F.F.C.* 3); English edition, enlarged by Stith Thompson, *ibid.*, 1928 (*F.F.C.* 74).

[2] A complete index of all known motives is a desideratum. I understand that such an one is being prepared by the American scholar Stith Thompson. For the present, cf. A. Christensen, *Motif et thème*, Helsingfors, 1925 (*F.F.C.* 59).

[3] The greatest collection of variants is that of J. Bolte and G. Polívka *Anmerkungen zu den Kinder- und Hausmärchen der Brüder Grimm*, Leipzig 1913–18, in 3 vols. A fourth volume is in progress.

[4] For a good list of the African material, cf. Aarne-Thompson, *The Types of the Folk-Tale*, Helsingfors, 1928 (*F.F.C.* 74), p. 18 sq.

[5] Standard edition: a cura di Giuseppe Rua, Bologna, 1899–1908; ²Bari, 1927.

[6] The work is written in the Neapolitan dialect; it had long been an extremely rare book when B. Croce undertook the publication of a critical edition. Of this only one volume appeared in print. For practical purposes it is best to consult Croce's translation of the work into modern Italian: *Il Pentamerone ossia La Fiaba delle Fiabe*, Bari, 1925, 2 vols.

[7] A good survey will be found in the third volume of the Grimms' *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, first published in 1856 but reprinted in the Reclam edition of the work. Cf. also Charles Deulin, *Les Contes de ma mère l'Oye avant Perrault*, Paris, 1879.

[8] *Mitteilungen der anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien*, XXXI, 62–70.

[9] A. H. Krappe, *Balor with the Evil Eye*, New York, 1927, pp. 44–79.

[10] Th. Benfey, *Pantschatantra*, Leipzig, 1859. A number of equally useful and lucid studies of this great and sympathetic scholar, one of the lights of the "Georgia Augusta" of his time, were printed in his review *Orient und Occident*, Göttingen, 1862–4, and partly reprinted after his death in his *Kleinere Schriften*, Berlin, 1890–2. Benfey's great folkloristic work badly needs an English translation, revised and brought up to date, since the German originals have long since been out of print.

[11] *A.J.Ph.*, XLIX, 267–75.

[12] Joseph Bédier, *Les Fabliaux*, Paris, 1893.

[13] Cf. especially his *Custom and Myth* (London, 1885), *Myth, Ritual and Religion* (1887), *Modern Mythology* (1897), *The Origins of Religion* (1908).

[14] *Folklore as an Historical Science.* Cf. also the same author's *Ethnology in Folklore*, London, 1892.

[15] *The Childhood of Fiction*, London, 1905.

[16] Cf. for example his excellent study on the story of the *Unfaithful Wife* in *Z.V.V.*, XIII (1903), pp. 1–24; 129–49.

[17] *Etudes folkloriques*, Paris, 1922.

[18] *Revue des traditions populaires*, XXVII (1912), pp. 337 sqq.; 394 sqq.; 497 sqq.; 545 sqq.

[19] *B.H.*, XXVI, 305–11; XXX, 182–4; *Le Moyen Age*, XXXVI, 85–92; XXXVIII, 190–207; *N.S.M.*, II, 119–24; *R.C.*, XLIII, 124–31; *A.R.*, XI, 168–76; *M.S.G.V.*, XXVIII, 131–6; *S.S.N.*, X, 14–25; *M.L.R.*, XXIII, 216–22; *A.J.Ph.*, XLIX, 267–75; *Balor with the Evil Eye*, pp. 44–79; 181–90.

[20] Cf. Krohn, *Die folkloristische Arbeitsmethode.* For a practical application of this method, cf. the following monographs: A. Aarne, *Vergleichende Märchenforschungen*, Helsingfors, 1907; *Der Mann aus dem Paradiese, ibid.*, 1915 (*F.F.C.* 22); *Der reiche Mann und sein Schwiegersohn, ibid.*, 1916 (23); *Die Tiere auf der Wanderschaft, ibid.*, 1913 (11); *Der tiersprachenkundige Mann und seine neugierige Frau, ibid.*, 1914 (15); R. Th. Christianson, *The Tale of the Two Travellers, ibid.*, 1916 (24); L. Mackensen, *Der singende Knochen, ibid.*, 1923 (49); E. Philippson, *Der Märchentyp vom König Drosselbart, ibid.*, 1923 (50); N. P. Andrejew, *Die Legende von den zwei Erzsündern, ibid.*, 1924 (54); cf. *J.E.G.Ph.* XXV, 263–9; A. H. Krappe, *La leggenda di S. Eustachio, N.S.M.*, III, 223–58. Jan de Vries, *Die Märchen von klugen Rätsellösern*, Helsingfors, 1928 (*F.F.C.* 73). On Antti Aarne, his life and his work, cf. K. Krohn, in *F.F.C.* 64 (1926), pp. 3 sqq.

[21] Cf. A. Wesselski, *Märchen des Mittelalters*, Berlin, 1925.

[22] Cf. E. S. Hartland, *The Legend of Perseus*, London, 1894–6, II, 31 sqq.

[23] *N.M.*, XXVI, 13–18.

[24] G. Jacob, *Märchen und Traum*, Hannover, 1923, cf. *M.L.N.*, XL, 112–15.

[25] Aarne-Thompson, *The Types of the Folk-Tale*, p. 74 sq.; E. S. Hartland, *The Science of Fairy Tales*, London, 1890, pp. 161 sqq.

[26] Burton, I, 128 sqq.

[27] *Das Rätsel der Sphinx*, Berlin, 1889.

[28] A. H. Krappe, *Etudes de mythologie et de folklore germaniques*, Paris, 1928, pp. 128–35.

[29] *M.L.N.*, XL, 114.

[30] P. Saintyves, *Les Contes de Perrault et les récits parallèles*, Paris, 1923; cf. *R.R.*, XVI, 187–9.

[31] For the entertainment of the reader I quote Karl Abraham, *Dreams and Myths*, a study in race (*sic*) psychology, New York, 1913. The monograph is a translation from the German. Evidently there is always money enough available for the rendering into English of trash of this type, whilst there is none for the translation of books of generally admitted merit, such as of Th. Benfey, E. Cosquin, or G. Huet.

[32] J. Bolte, *Zeugnisse zur Geschichte der Märchen*, Helsingfors, 1921 (*F.F.C.* 39).

[33] *A.R.*, IX, 347.

[34] Helge Holmström, *Studier över Svanjungfrumotivet i Volundarquiða och annorstädes*, Malmö, 1919.

[35] *A.R.*, VIII, 398 sqq.; cf. XI, 163 sqq.

[36] *A.R.*, IX, 347 sqq. Cf. also H. Gressmann, *Ursprung und Entwicklung der Josephsage*, in *Eucharisterion*, H. Gunkel dargebracht, Göttingen, 1923, pp. 1–55.

[37] *Folk-Lore*, XXXVI, 308–21.

[38] O. Hackman, *Das Polyphemmärchen in der Volksüberlieferung*, Helsingfors, 1904.

[39] See above, note 9.

[40] Hartland, *op. cit.*; cf. also Bolte-Polívka, I., 528 sqq.

[41] Cf. my *Balor*, pp. 126–31.

[42] Cf. Godefroid Kurth, *Histoire poétique des Merovingiens*, Paris, 1893, p. 294.

[43] London, 1893.

[44] Cf. the mediaeval legends of Gregory, Judas and St. Alban; R. Köhler, *Kl. Schr.*, II, 173 sqq.; Sir J. G. Frazer, *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, London, 1911, II, 107 sqq.; *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament*, London, 1918, II, 565.

[45] Cf. R. Eisler, *Weltenmantel und Himmelszelt*, München, 1910.

[46] *Folk-Lore*, XXXIV, 141–7.

[47] On the helpful animal in antiquity, cf. A. Marx, *Griechische Märchen von dankbaren Tieren*, Stuttgart, 1889. Cf. also J. Bédier, *Les Fabliaux* (1925), p. 110.

[48] G. H. Gerould, *The Grateful Dead*, London, 1908; Aarne-Thompson, pp. 79 sqq.

[49] On the "Overhearing" motive cf. Bolte-Polívka, II, 481 sq., Tawney-Penzer, *The Ocean of Story*, London, 1924 sqq., I, 48; II, 107; 219 sq.; III, 48; 60; 62; VII, viii and xviii.

[50] Tawney-Penzer, III, 48, 60, 62; VII, 235; F. A. Steel, *Tales of the*

Punjab, London, 1894, p. 165; J. Dutoil, *Jatakam*, München, 1906–21, IV, 291; Jarl Charpentier, *Studien zur indischen Erzählungsliteratur*, I, Upsala, 1908, p. 140; E. Lüders, *Buddhistische Märchen aus dem alten Indien*, Jena, 1921, p. 89; Wesselski, p. 203.

[51] *C.J.*, XXI, 21 sqq.

[52] Aarne-Thompson, p. 99 sq.

[53] *Rh.M.*, 1929, pp. 249–67.

[54] Aarne-Thompson, p. 59 sq.

[55] *Balor with the Evil Eye*, pp. 80–92.

[56] C. Robert, *Oidipus*, Berlin, 1915, I, 49.

[57] The English reader will find an excellent description of such a state of society and its consequences in Scott's masterly novel, *The Fair Maid of Perth*.

[58] *S.S.N.*, VII, 265–9; *A.R.*, VIII, 390 sqq.

[59] Bolte-Polívka, II, 100, 599.

[60] W. Radloff, *Proben der Volkslitteratur der türkischen Stämme Süd-Sibiriens*, St. Petersburg, 1866–86.

[61] F. A. Steel, *Tales of the Punjab*, London, 1894, p. 1 sqq.

[62] G. Kahlo, *Die Verse in den Sagen und Märchen*, Diss. Jena, 1919.

[63] Köhler, *Kl. Schr.*, I, 121 sqq.

[64] Cf. also T. F. Crane, *The External History of the Kinder- und Hausmärchen of the Brothers Grimm*, *M.Ph.*, XIV, 577–610; XV, 65–76; 355–83.

[65] R. Petsch, *Formelhafte Schlüsse im Volksmärchen*, Berlin, 1900.

[66] *The Rise of the Greek Epic*³, Oxford, 1924, pp. 120 sqq.

[67] M.L.N., XXXVIII, 470 sqq.; *Etudes*, pp. 115 sqq.

[68] Hartland, *Perseus*; Bolte-Polívka, I, 528 sqq.; *M.L.R.*, XVIII, 152 sqq.

[69] Bolte-Polívka, I, 56 sqq.; G. Huet, *Le Moyen Age*, XXI (1919), pp. 162–84.

[70] *Balor*, p. 171; *M.L.R.*, XVIII, 158, n. 6.

[71] Bolte-Polívka, III, 534, n. 1.

[72] Cf. E. Cosquin, *Transactions of the International Folk-Lore Congress*, 1891 (London, 1892), p. 69.

[73] A. H. Post, *Grundriss der ethnologischen Jurisprudenz*, Oldenburg u. Leipzig, 1894–5, I, 30; E. Samter, *Geburt, Hochzeit und Tod*, Leipzig-Berlin, 1911, p. 98.

[74] Cf. Hartland, *Perseus*, III, 203 sqq.

[75] *Mitra*, I, col. 101 sqq.

[76] Aarne-Thompson, p. 50, No. 311; cf. F. Brie, *Das Märchen von Childe Rowland* in *Anglica, Alois Brandl zum 70. Geburtstag überreicht* (*Palaestra*, 148), pp. 118–43.

[77] *N.M.*, XXVII, 65.

[78] *Ibid.*, p. 70.

[79] *Balor*, pp. 67–8.

[80] *S.S.N.*, X, 14–25.

[81] *M.S.G.V.*, XXVIII, 131–6.

[82] *A.R.*, XI, 168 sqq.

CHAPTER II

THE MERRY TALE

UNLIKE the fairy tale, the merry tale was not among the first of the creations of popular genius to attract the attention of scholars contemporary with the Romantic Movement. To be sure, the reason was not that the materials were lacking. On the contrary, a number of years before the close of the eighteenth century French antiquarians, such as Legrand d'Aussy, had unearthed from the manuscript collections of mediaeval libraries the merry tales in verse which are known under the Picard name of *Fabliaux*.[1] It was evidently a feeling of prudishness which inclined the Romanticists to consider this type as rather an inferior *genre*. The Grimms, it is true, with their liking for comprehensiveness, did not refuse to include in their collection a few representatives of this type, sometimes culled from the sixteenth-century jest-books and collections of merry tales ; yet their comment on them is rather meagre. Benfey drew no distinction in principle between fairy tales and merry tales, his Indianist theory applying to them both. On the other hand, M. Bédier, in his attack on that theory, had mainly the merry tales in view ; what he says, in his book, on fairy tales and fables must be regarded rather as an *hors d'œuvre*. Nor have the Finnish folklorists declined to subject merry tales to the same geographic-historical method as they apply to fairy tales.[2]

By *merry tale* we mean a short narrative, in prose or verse, relating an episodical event or series of events culminating in a humorous situation. Its subject-matter is taken from everyday life : the occurrence of supernatural elements is rare and even then serves only to create the basis underlying the situation, not the situation itself.

It follows from the shortness of this type that the number of motives composing it must be rather small ; often enough the merry tale consists of but one motive. However, the types of merry tales are fixed quite as much as are those of fairy tales.

In certain merry tales, for example those of the sixth Day of

Boccaccio's great work, there is no action at all, but the humorous situation rests singly upon a witty answer. The merry tale thus merges almost imperceptibly into the anecdote and the apophthegm.

The general scantiness of motives carries with it another important consequence. We have seen above that the theory of a polygenesis of fairy tales is an absurdity, because one cannot imagine a complex story, consisting of a considerable number of very definite motives arranged in a very definite order, to have arisen independently in more than one place, nay, in more than one brain. It is, of course, quite different with the motives. There is nothing improbable in the fact that certain motives, sufficiently simple as they are, may have arisen independently in different places and in different epochs. In fact, the more rudimentary a given motive is, the more firmly it is grounded on some piece of universal belief, on some universal custom or institution, the more likely it is to have originated time and again, in parts far remote, without any historical connexion existing or having ever existed.

Such a motive, for example, is that of the magic music, found in the ancient Orpheus myth, in modern poetry and in fairy tales belonging to quite different types and scattered all over the surface of the globe. Its basic root is the well-known experience that music has a certain influence on the human mind, and this experience is known to savages no less than to a Wagnerian audience.

The fact, then, that the same motive is found, say, in Southern California and in one of the Sunda Islands, admits of no conclusion whatever. Since, as we have seen, a considerable number of merry tales consist of very few motives, often even of only one, the theory of polygenesis cannot be rejected off-hand. An example will make this clear.

In the eighth story of the eighth day of Boccaccio's *Decameron* the following choice incident is told, with the usual animal gusto of that greatest of all writers of merry tales. A certain lady had a knight for a lover who had a squire in his employ. One day he decides to call on the lady and sends his squire ahead. The lady seduces the squire and upon the arrival of the lord cleverly conceals him, denying having laid her eyes on him that day. The second rendezvous is in progress when the husband arrives. With an enviable presence of mind the lady advises the knight to rush out, sword in hand, swearing and cursing, adding that she would attend to the rest. When the astonished husband inquires into the reason of the strange scene he has just witnessed, the lady produces the squire, telling the innocent husband that she had offered him shelter on seeing him pursued by his enraged master.

This plot, after all, is fairly simple and may have originated repeatedly in different places and in different civilizations, provided their societies were sophisticated enough to form their own opinions on feminine astuteness in certain matters. Still, where historical connexions are known to have existed or to exist, as between France and Italy or between Europe and the Near East, the assumption of a diffusion of such a tale by migration is probably the more likely. Yet even on this assumption it is extremely difficult, generally impossible, to trace the history of the story, and for the following reasons.

The number of available variants, both historical and oral, may be considerable enough, though as a rule it is not so large as the number of fairy tale variants. Further, there is only one motive involved and, most important of all, this one motive is as a rule so extremely subject to variations with each narrator that no conclusion of any consequence can be drawn therefrom. Thus, in the case of the above-mentioned story, the knight of Boccaccio is, in a modern version told by a soldier, apt to become an officer, the squire his orderly. When told by a sailor, the former will of course be a sea-captain, the latter his cabin-boy. They even may become uncle and nephew or father and son. These variations will but rarely permit us to trace the path a certain tale of this type has taken, and it is to be feared that M. Bédier's scepticism is on the whole justified.[3]

To these still another difficulty must be added. In so far as the merry tale depicts ordinary human life and presupposes the most elementary relationships such as kinship and kinship by marriage, those of master and servant, priest and layman, etc., its territory is not nearly so circumscribed as is that of the fairy tale. Even half-civilized people who would never grasp a genuine fairy tale of the more complicated sort may enjoy very much a merry tale with its elementary simplicity and its extreme realism. The merry tale, in other words, is not bound to any definite society but floats freely from country to country.

Under these circumstances it must be admitted that the merry tale is properly speaking ageless in the sense that it must have sprung up the moment man formed a certain social organization, however rudimentary. In fact, the written records fully confirm this view ; for whereas in the case of fairy tales the oral variants always far outnumber the historical ones, with merry tales precisely the opposite is true. Further, whereas no one before Straparola ever dreamt of collecting fairy tales, collections of merry tales have existed from the dawn of ancient civilization. Evidently they have by their very nature a wider appeal than fairy stories.

This comparatively large number of historical variants and of collections of merry tales permits what is not usually permitted in the case of fairy tales, that is, a *conclusio ex silentio*. What is meant is this: if we have five or six mediaeval collections not directly dependent upon one another, each telling some 500 merry tales, and if a certain type or certain types are not to be found in any of them, the conclusion is justified that the type in question was not then known, and the burden of proof rests with those who undertake to hold the opposite view.

The absence of the supernatural element in merry tales and their frank realism have prevented this type from becoming entangled in the vagaries of the Mythological School. That was no doubt a good thing. Yet merry tales have not been entirely divorced from divine persons. On the contrary, Homer himself knew certain merry tales which he, irreverently enough, had no scruple in attaching to the Olympian gods. Some of his tales are in fact quite as scandalous as any thirteenth-century *fabliau*, witness the episode of Ares and Aphrodite being caught in the net of Hephaistos. The fact that the protagonists have become divine does not make the tale more moral, far from it. Why therefore antiquity should have frowned upon the so-called Milesian tales, certainly not much worse, is quite a puzzle. Presumably the frowning was limited to some puritanical-minded writers such as Cicero and Seneca, who simply happen to be the ones whose judgments on these as on other matters have been preserved.

The Milesian tales have been lost, in their ancient form at least, but it is to be suspected that many, if not all, of them turn up again in the mediaeval *fabliaux*, in Boccaccio and in the *Arabian Nights*. Quite aside from this, there can be little doubt that a few of them were reproduced by ancient authors whose works have come down to us, for example, Plautus, Petronius Arbiter, Apuleius, and Macrobius. Still other stories related by various ancient writers may not have belonged to that collection proper, yet are closely akin to it in spirit. For example, there is the Herodotean tale of the Egyptian monarch whose blindness can be cured only with the urine of an absolutely faithful wife and who certainly finds this no easy cure.[4] There is the famous tale of the *Master Thief* and his transactions with the Pharaoh Rhampsinitis, a story which has been affirmed to be Egyptian and as hotly denied to be so, by origin at least. Yet with the unusually large number of variants, both historical and oral, it should not be impossible to arrive at a definite solution.[5] There is further the tale which forms the central episode of Plautus' *Miles Gloriosus*, of the woman who, with the help of a hole in the wall, makes her simple-minded husband believe, when he sees her in the house of his rival, that that woman is her double, until she has been safely abducted by her paramour. This story lived down into the Middle Ages and forms part of the *Seven Sages of Rome*.[6] There is the narrative of the *Matron of Ephesus*, recounted by Petronius Arbiter.[7] The parable, told by Aesop and Flavius Josephus, of the leper who prefers to be tormented by the flies which have already had their fill of his blood rather than to have them driven off and their place taken by new and still hungry flies, a parable which was applied to the greed of Roman governors but which applies equally well to the two American political parties, no doubt belongs to the same category of tales.[8] Mention should also be made of the story of the dying son who writes to his mother that he can be cured only by putting on the shirt of a man who has not known sorrow or by having himself carried into a house in which no death has ever been mourned, a story which appears to turn up first in the rich literature of spurious letters of Alexander the Great to his mother Olympias.[9] The list might be prolonged, since the ancients visibly relished merry tales of this sort, whilst some of their story-tellers, Herodotus, for instance, have not been surpassed in this art to this day. But, to bring the difficulty of the problem of the diffusion again to the fore, I shall finally mention the well-known story of the youth who imposes upon the credulity of a religiously-besotted woman by making her believe that he is a god.[10] This tale is found in India as well as in the ancient Mediterranean countries, the most famous version being probably that of Flavius Josephus, put by him and Tacitus in the reign of Tiberius. In treating this story it must be remembered that it is based upon the widely known belief in the possibility of a divine being having intercourse with a mortal and the ritual of the *ἱεϱος γάμος* or holy marriage. This belief existing, it is highly probable that merry tales of this type should grow out of it; nay, it is certainly possible that impostors should have misused the belief in question in precisely this manner. At least there is nothing inherently improbable in the story of Mundus and Paulina. Thus the theory of polygenesis in the case of a story of this type is not only possible, it is even the most probable, and therefore the most acceptable.

With the decline of narrative literature in the Occident after the fall of the Empire tales of this sort took refuge as it were in the big chronicles and in the biographies of the saints. Thus in the vast compilation of Gregory of Tours, *De gloria confessorum*, we find the oldest Western variant of a story relating how an ape threw overboard the ill-gotten wealth of a wine-merchant.[11] As the volume of literature, at first chiefly, if not exclusively, Latin, grows, the number of merry tales increases. John of Salisbury inserted quite a number in his compilation called the *Policraticus*, among them the well-known story of the *Matron of Ephesus*. If, as in this latter case, the tale in question was already known in classical antiquity it is not always easy, or even possible, to trace the precise filiation. In some cases, no doubt, there existed Latin compilations written by mediaeval hands now lost or still buried in European libraries, and these compilations were the intermediaries between the classics and the compilers of the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Many of the narrative writers of Latin speech lived down into the Middle Ages, as for example Macrobius, and thus it is not surprising that most of the tales of his *Saturnalia* were current throughout mediaeval times. One Greek writer was twice translated into Latin and enjoyed considerable popularity, especially with ecclesiastical writers; I refer to Josephus. Finally, there were the commentaries on the classics, notably Vergil and Statius, embodying a certain number of ancient myths. otherwise known by brief allusions in the Latin classics and by Greek texts, unknown, of course, in the West. The rôle played by the Vergilian commentary of 'Servius' is particularly noteworthy in this connexion.

The age of the crusades saw the rise of a peculiar type of compilation embodying multitudes of merry tales, the so-called *exempla* literature.[12] Confronted with the rude task of explaining to an illiterate peasantry and an equally illiterate nascent bourgeoisie the basic truths of a creed, transcendal and ethical, the Church hit upon the device of parable and allegory, for which it found a good precedent, of course, in the New Testament. For their general brevity and conciseness the merry tales were considered particularly fit for such a purpose. Their frequently unsavoury contents were no obstacle, since the attached moral, i.e. the allegorical interpretation, was supposed, rightly or wrongly, to offset any evil consequences that might follow from the story itself. One may readily imagine that the mediaeval congregation, infinitely more naïve and less hypocritical than any modern congregation would be—at least in the Occident—frankly relished those tales, perhaps even more than it did the moral. Serious-minded people, Dante for example, clearly realized the danger implied in this mode of preaching and voiced their protest, with little success.[13]

As a matter of fact, the collections of *exempla* continued growing, from the twelfth century, in all countries of Europe.

The tales were systematically arranged, according to the particular virtues they were meant to drive home, and thus required the very minimum of labour and intelligence on the part of the clergyman. Nor did Protestantism and the Reformation put a stop to the movement. At the most, it led to an expurgation of existing collections. Nor are *exempla* disdained at this day and age by the various so-called evangelical sects in the New World. On the contrary, many of the twentieth-century evangelists are able to tell a story of this type with as much animal gusto and *verve* as any of the mediaeval preachers, Franciscan or Dominican.

Of the many collections of *exempla* the most important are probably those of Jacques de Vitry,[14] of Nicole Bozon,[15], the *Gesta Romanorum* [16] in their various redactions and the Spanish *Libro de los Enxiemplos.*[17] The proper treatment of these works does not belong to the domain of folk-lore but to that of the literary history of the Middle Ages, which is yet to be written. Suffice it to say that a number of tales found in these collections appear to have been unknown in Europe in Antiquity [18] and the early Middle Ages, whilst they are of decidedly older date in the Orient. On the other hand, the Oriental affiliations of certain *exempla* collections—Jacques de Vitry himself spent a number of years in the Holy Land—are historically proved. These facts, especially in cases where on account of the strangeness of the motive the theory of polygenesis is not applicable, render certain the Oriental provenance of some types of merry tales. One of the best illustrations is furnished by Chapter XXVIII of the *Gesta Romanorum* (ed. Oesterley).

> An old woman is bribed by a wealthy youth to seduce for him the wife of a merchant temporarily absent. The old woman rubs the eyes of a dog with pepper, calls on the wife and tells her that the dog, which appears to be weeping, had been a young woman, who for her hard-heartedness toward young men had been transformed into her present shape.

This story is found in a great many Eastern collections; in Europe it makes its first appearance with the *Disciplina clericalis* of Pierre Alphonse, but even afterwards it never acquired much popularity in oral tradition. To deny then its essential character as that of an Oriental importation would be as futile as it would be to affirm that a tale of this sort could have been invented independently at different times and in different countries.

Later in date than the rise of the *exempla* literature in Europe is that of the *fabliaux.* The Picard word *fabliau* denotes a merry tale in French octo-syllable verse, such as flourished in North-eastern France during the thirteenth century. The rise of this type of literature must, however, be dated from the twelfth century, since we possess a number of German translations of such *fabliaux* from the first decade of the thirteenth century [19] and a certain time must be allowed for their diffusion beyond the linguistic frontier.

The thirteenth century also saw toward its end the rise of the prose *novella*, i.e. an Italian, that is, Tuscan, merry tale having particular regard for the rules of narrative art and hence usually of a rather high artistic form.[20] Whilst the earliest collection of *novelle* is still fairly rudimentary and harks back to the anecdote and the apophthegm,[21] the *genre* quickly rose to its apogee with Boccaccio's immortal work.[22] Boccaccio's successors carried the literary tradition, with more or less success, down to the sixteenth and even to the seventeenth century.[23] In Mediaeval Spain we have the famous *Conde Lucanor* of the infante Juan Manuel, a collection of truly delightful tales,[24] many of which, such as the prototype of Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* and the *Emperor's New Clothes*,[25] have had a glorious history. In France the prose tale does not appear before the fifteenth century, its best known representative being the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*, written down at or near the court of the dauphin, the later King Louis XI.[26] The sixteenth-century story-tellers of France fall back into the Italian tradition with the *Heptameron* of Marguérite d'Angoulême.[27] The cultivation of the merry tale in France probably reached its climax with the *Contes* of La Fontaine, a work which, in spite of its gracefulness and wit, seems to be on the decline in the esteem of French literary critics, quite wrongly, I believe. In the following century Voltaire adopted and reproduced on quite a large scale old merry-tale motives, which he found, however, not in the old collections, as a rule inaccessible to him, but in foreign writers, a few of them English.[28] In the Teutonic countries the *exempla* literature was slow in dying ; the fifteenth century still had seen the translation into Swedish from the German of one of them, the well-known *Seelen-Trost*.[29] The *exempla* also were the models and immediate parents of the jest-books, that is, collections of tales no longer serving a purely moral end but rather aiming to entertain and divert. Shakespeare knew and used some of these.[30] Nor were they wanting in Italy,[31] where on the contrary they were printed side by side with the collections of *novelle*, the more ambitious and more artistic tales, many of which furnished Shakespeare with his plots. *The Taming of the Shrew* is perhaps the best example of a merry tale having been enlarged and given a dramatic form.[32] Modern writers have occasionally worked up old merry tales, sometimes contenting themselves with a reproduction and a slight modernization, sometimes pouring new wine into the old bottles, that is, trying to give the old theme a new turn.[33]

Having thus glanced, though of necessity rather cursorily, over the historical material, we are now in a position to point out the chief characteristics of merry tales. Whilst the fairy tale is biographical, i.e. purporting to narrate the life of its hero from his childhood to the accomplishment of his last task, after which nothing more of any importance is supposed to befall him, the merry tale is episodical, that is, it picks out a single episode or a short series of intimately connected episodes forming after all but a very small portion of the hero's life. The fairy tale, as we have seen, tries to divert and to instruct ; the merry tale wants to entertain, to cause mirth among the listeners or readers. Its essential characteristic is humour, and its quality as a success or a failure must be measured solely according to the extent it fulfils this its main purpose. In the fairy tale the supernatural looms large ; in a merry tale it is, if occurring at all, quite negligible and in no wise affects its essential qualities. To give an example : there is a widespread merry tale narrating how a certain married couple are granted three wishes by some benevolent being. The wife utters a foolish wish ; her husband thereupon, in great wrath, expresses an even more foolish one at the expense of his wife, and then has to waste the last wish to undo the consequences of the second.[34] Here the supernatural element will be seen to introduce the action, as it were, to furnish the basis for the tale : but it has nothing to do with the humorous effect of the story, this latter element being entirely the consequence of very human actions and very human foibles.

If the number of characters in the fairy tale is small, it is naturally apt to be still smaller in the merry tale. As a rule, too, they are types, and it requires the art of a Boccaccio to convert these types into living characters. No attempt at an idealization is made ; on the contrary, the men and women moving in merry tales are everyday people facing everyday problems, everyday temptations. The episodical nature of the merry tale precludes, of course, any character development. If the listeners would like to conclude that one or the other of the characters has profited from the experience recounted in the story, there is of course nothing to prevent them from taking such an optimistic view. This fact leads us to consider the question of morality, on which a good deal has been written, but little that is more to the point than the exposition of M. Bédier in his oft-quoted work on the *Fabliaux*, more to the point, I say, because defending what is essentially a common-sense view.[35]

Humour shares with its kinsfolk Wit and Satire the important fact, regrettable no doubt, but a fact all the same, that the ensuing laughter must of necessity be at some one's expense. Now all ages and all societies have known certain groups of people which for one reason or another furnished material for both humour and satire. To give a familiar illustration. Throughout the Middle Ages and even down to modern times certain professions or trades specializing in the working up of certain raw materials furnished by the consumers, as for example tailors and millers, were thought, often not without reason, we may be sure, to appropriate a good portion of that material and to furnish less flour than the amount of grain given them warranted or to keep for themselves a good part of the cloth they received. As a result numerous merry tales make millers and tailors the butt of their satirical attacks. Certain learned professions were held in no better esteem, and mediaeval satire is as hard on physicians and lawyers as any merry tales invented since. Nor has this tendency disappeared in the New World. On the contrary, the good stories about the practices of American lawyers and politicians would fill a handsome volume and afford no less choice reading than the mediaeval tales with their constant attacks on the women and the clergy.

These general considerations must be borne in mind if one is to judge correctly the vast literature of the French *fabliaux* or even the stories of the *Decameron*. It would be most unjust were one to conclude from such tales the general perversity of the social groups in question, though it may be frankly admitted that often enough their general standards gave room for a well-deserved criticism. Nor is it permissible, as is sometimes done, to accuse the Middle Ages of having originated such an attitude toward the fair sex and the spiritual advisers of the people. The story of the *Matron of Ephesus* was current in classical Antiquity, is most probably of Oriental origin, and was relished by the readers of Voltaire, who incorporated a version of it in his *Zadig*, quite as much as it had been in the Middle Ages. The story of the philosopher Secundus, certainly one of the most misogynic tales ever invented, arose in India and migrated to the Near East and hence to Europe in early mediaeval times.[36] Finally, the number of hypocritical and lecherous priests is quite as large in Indian tales as it is in mediaeval *fabliaux*, and one of Mr. Sinclair Lewis' latest novels shows that the theme has not run its course yet.

Another very significant factor which, as M. Bédier rightly observes, is often neglected, is the plot proper and the important distinction which must be made between an immoral story and one that is merely unsavoury. Some of the genuinely popular merry tales belong to the latter group, none to the former. The moral sense of the story-teller is rather highly developed ; where there is a villain, his villainy is not only foiled, but he receives a severe punishment into the bargain. Boccaccio's story of the priest who assumes the rôle of the Angel Gabriel, or one of its immediate predecessors, the story of Mundus and Paulina as told by Josephus, are perhaps the best illustrations that can be given. There is, further, the *fabliau* of *Constant de Hamel* relating, with a good deal of gusto and zest, the discomfiture of three village tyrants desirous of ruining the home of a simple farmer. It may be objected that there is still another group of tales, laughing at the expense of the jealous and deceived husband, tales which furnished Molière with the plots for several of his plays. The explanation is that even these stories were ' moral ' in a sense, because jealousy was then regarded as a capital and highly unbecoming vice, especially when evinced by a man. With that view one may differ nowadays ; but then we all know that moral ideas are subject to change from one century to another.

This same observation holds, though in a greater degree, for the merry tales classed above as ' indelicate '. Our generation forgets all too easily that our sense of delicacy in certain matters is one of the most recently acquired. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries lacked it completely, as did, of course, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. When Voltaire had sent a manuscript of his scandalous poem *La Pucelle* to his friend Frederick of Prussia, the latter ingenuously tells him in a letter that the queen, his mother, and his younger sister, the later margravine of Bayreuth, were reading it with a great deal of enjoyment.

From the general character of merry tales and their plots it would be quite difficult to determine the country of a given version ; the form alone may sometimes afford an indication. In certain *fabliaux* an occasional place-name or the mention of some local saint might, even in an Italian translation, point to the provenance of the original from North-eastern France. The whole *genre* is ' neutral ', i.e. relatively colourless with regard both to time and to place. For not even the mention of feudal institutions would definitely fix the time of composition ; a vague sort of feudalism, entailing the power of certain officials or dignitaries over the common man, is found in many societies, not even excepting the United States, and I can imagine the story of *Constant de Hamel* enacted in almost any town of the former Slave States. It is clear, besides, that precisely on account of the prevalent realism in merry tales the adaptation of certain realistic details to altered conditions is of the easiest, and is in most cases accomplished by individual story-tellers almost unconsciously.

Before concluding this chapter it may be well to quote some practical examples in the problem of the diffusion of merry tales, and it is natural to give preference to such as by their very character or the relative complexity of their motives would seem to allow of more definite conclusions than the majority of the tales analysed by M. Bédier in support of his own scepticism.

Mention has already been made of the story of the *Master Thief.* There is nothing particularly national about the *genre* to which this narrative belongs. Tales of roguery have been in vogue in all civilizations about which we have any knowledge. But it certainly is a noteworthy fact that such tales will spring up as a rule toward the end of each civilization, when the twilight begins to set in. For example, the rogue stories which bulk so largely in the *Arabian Nights* are known to date from the last centuries of what O. Spengler calls the ' magic ' civilization, when the califates of Bagdad and Cairo were drawing near their final dissolution. Again the thieves' tales of Indian literature and folk-lore clearly belong to a time of general dissolution after the old Sanskrit civilization had reached its apogee. The conclusion is therefore justified that the tale of the treasure-house of Rhampsinitis cannot possibly have arisen in a vastly different environment. On the contrary, it presupposes not only a high civilization but even one which should be called over-ripe, one for which the heyday of its glory was definitely gone. Herodotus' narrative definitely localizes the tale in the Egypt of the middle period, and the general character of the troublous times that followed upon the reign of the great Rameses is well enough known to justify our assumption that if it did not originate that particular story, it certainly must have favoured, according to all analogy, the rise of precisely this type of story. Gaston Paris,[37] arguing from what is generally known about Egyptian manners and customs, believed an Egyptian origin of the tale impossible, but connected one of its main episodes with the well-known licence prevailing in certain Mesopotamian cults and hence inferred that the story originated in Babylon. The conclusion is justified solely on the assumption that tales of roguery must of necessity reflect reality. Such is, however, not the case and never has been. The adventurous element must always be there ; popular art will always be inclined to choose royalty for its chief subjects, and it is as illogical to deny the Egyptian provenance of our story on that ground as it would be to deny the French origin of the *Roman de Trubert* (a very licentious thirteenth-century *fabliau* of considerable length) on the plea that no French duke could ever have played the part attributed to him in that work. It is of course quite a different problem to determine whether the story was first *invented* in Egypt or merely resuscitated there, having migrated to Egypt in even earlier times from some unknown civilization. That we do not know and shall never know. Yet this much is certain, that all the known forms are ultimately derived from Egypt.

Among the merry tales, no doubt, must be classed the story of the Brahmans who resuscitate a lion.[38] The earliest versions are some Indian compilations and a Midrash text. The more recent Indian variants drive home the fact that erudition and common sense are not always found in the same individual. The oldest known Indian text and the Hebrew version finish off with the moral *Do no good to the evil-doer, for you will reap only ingratitude.* This important fact clearly proves that the story did originate in India and that the Near Eastern text is derived from an Indian one of considerable antiquity, older by far than the Indian compilations which have incorporated the tale.

Lest it be thought that this book is written with an undue bias for Benfey's Indianist theory, we shall lastly turn to a story of North European origin. In the Spanish *Conde Lucanor* there is a tale relating how a thief sold his soul to the Devil on the condition that the latter was to help him in his exploits and to come to his rescue in case he should ever be captured. The Devil keeps his promise, though each time more slowly. When the thief is finally condemned to be hanged and led to the gallows, the Devil comes and hands him a box which is to contain one thousand maravedis, for the noble purpose of bribing the judge. The thief is not slow in delivering the box to the party in question, and when at the time of the execution no rope can be found, the judge cries 'miracle ! ' maintaining that the condemned man must be innocent. As a prudent man, however, he opens the box to find in it, instead of the expected money, a good stout rope. Quite naturally, he flies into a rage and has the thief hanged forthwith.

This story occurs first in an Old French work which purports (and we have no reason to doubt the statement) to be a translation from the Anglo-Saxon. Now in the pagan Teutonic literatures, both of England and of Scandinavia, it is indeed not the Devil who plays such pranks on his protégés but the old war-god Othin himself. In particular the trick of the rope has a close analogy in the Norse story of King Viðar, where Othin changes a harmless vegetable climber into a rope, thus causing the death of his protégé the king.[39]

These examples, to which a number of others could be easily added, will show that there is no ground for a general adoption of

M. Bédier's sceptical attitude even for the merry tale. Many of them, it is to be feared, will never be quite explored ; still others may have arisen independently in different places and at different times ; but some will unquestionably allow of further research with a strong probability that such research will be crowned with a certain amount of success.

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[2] For a practical application of the Finnish method to merry tales, cf. the following monographs : A. Aarne, *Schwänke über schwerhörige Menschen*, Helsingfors, 1914 (*F.F.C.* 20) ; *Der Mann aus dem Paradiese*, *ibid.*, 1915 (*F.F.C.* 22) ; W. Anderson, *Kaiser und Abt*, *ibid.*, 1923 (*F.F.C.* 24) ; cf. *J.E.G.Ph.*, XXII, 433–6 ; A. Steppuhn, *Das Fablel vom Prestre comporté und seine Versionen*, Königsberg i. Pr., 1913 ; W. Suchier, *Der Schwank von der viermal getöteten Leiche in der Literatur des Abend- und Morgenlandes*, Halle, 1922.

[3] Bédier, *op. cit.*, pp. 228 sqq. ; Letterario Di Francia, *Novellistica* I Milano, 1924, p. 78.

[4] Herod. II. 111.

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[9] R. Köhler, *Aufsätze über Märchen und Volkslieder*, Berlin, 1894, pp. 118 sqq.

[10] O. Weinreich, *Der Trug des Nektanebos*, Berlin-Leipzig, 1911.

[11] *Neophilologus*, XIV, 90 sq.

[12] T. F. Crane, *Mediaeval Sermon-Books and Stories*, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, XXI (1883–4), pp. 49–78 ; LVI (1917), pp. 369–402.

[13] Cf. *Par.* XXIX, 103 sqq.

Non ha Firenze tanti Lapi e Bindi,
Quante si fatte favole per anno
In pergamo si gridan quinci e quindi,
Si che le pecorelle, che non sanno,
Tornan dal pasco pasciute di vento,
E non le scusa non veder lor danno.

[14] Ed. T. F. Crane, London, 1890 ; Goswin Frenken, *Die Exempla aus den Sermones communes des Jacob von Vitry*, München, 1914 ; Joseph Greven, *Die Exempla aus den Sermones feriales und communes des Jakob von Vitry*, Heidelberg, 1914.

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[18] The use of *exempla* or illustrative stories, however, was well known in classical antiquity, though the tales themselves were culled from mythology. Cf. on this subject R. Oehler, *Mythologische Exempla in der älteren grieschischen Dichtung*, Aarau, 1925, and F. Dornseiff, in *Vorträge d. Bibliothek Warburg*, IV, 220 sqq.

[19] Most of these are found in F. H. von der Hagen's *Gesammtabenteuer*.

[20] Cf. Letterario Di Francia, *Novellistica* I, Milano, 1924 (*Storia dei generi letterari italiani*).

[21] *Ibid.*, pp. 24 sqq.

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[30] W. Hazlitt, *Shakespeare Jest Books*, London, 1864.

[31] The most famous of all is the collection called *Facetiae* of the papal secretary Poggio Bracciolini, written in elegant Latin prose ; cf. Di Francia, pp. 335 sqq.

[32] Aarne-Thompson, p. 136.

[33] Cf. A. Andrae, *Das Weiterleben alter Fablios* (*sic*), *Lais, Legenden und anderer alter Stoffe, Romanische Forschungen*, XVI (1904), pp. 321–53.

[34] Bédier, pp. 212 sqq. ; Bolte-Polívka, II, 210 ; Aarne-Thompson, p. 117.

[35] *Ibid.*, pp. 309 sqq.

[36] *Balor with the Evil Eye*, pp. 181–90 ; cf. Moses Gaster in *Folk-Lore*, XXXIX, 108 sq.

[37] G. Paris, *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, LV, 151 sqq. ; 267 sqq.

[38] Cf. my study on the theme, forthcoming in *Folk-Lore*.

[39] *A.R.* VII, 470–7.

CHAPTER III

THE ANIMAL TALE

WE have seen above that the fairy tale cannot possibly have arisen in savagery but presupposes a civilization already higher than mere barbarism. The merry tale, whenever it presents relationships simple enough, may be presumed to have been possible among lower strata of the scale of civilization, though a good many of them cannot probably be supposed to antedate civilization. The third type of popular fiction, to which we turn now, the Animal Tale,[1] is however one of the oldest that are known to-day. Savages are quite as capable of inventing narratives of this nature as are their more civilized contemporaries; they may be even more so.

The animal tale in its most primitive form is essentially an aetiological story, i.e. a tale purporting to explain a cause (*αἰτία*). The facts are briefly these. From the very childhood of the race Man may be presumed to have shown considerable interest in the animal world around him, for reasons of pure self-interest, if not from intellectual curiosity. But even the savage is a keen observer and is struck by the zoological peculiarities of each animal form. His observations called for explanations. Why is it that a certain animal has a certain colouring? That it distinguishes itself from its fellows by a certain gait? That it leads a peculiar sort of life? Not having the information of the modern zoologist and biologist, he imagined a tale which was to furnish that explanation. This aetiological instinct is by no means dead even now; it is commonly found among children, and it may be said, philosophically speaking, that it presupposes the same combination, though in different proportions, of intellectual curiosity and imagination as all scientific pursuits, a combination, let us say, without which scholarly work is impossible. Thus a long but uninterrupted chain will be seen to connect the humble intellectual products of the savage with the highest scientific speculations of an Oliver Lodge or an Albert Einstein.

But, not to lose ourselves in speculations, let us quote a typical example. The bear, as is well known, is one of the few tailless animals of Northern Europe. The question then arose: Why does he lack a tail? And the answer was promptly given: Evidently because he lost it. That led to the second question: How did he lose it? And in answer the story arose telling how the fox inveigled him to dip his tail into the water, one winter night, to catch fish, how the water froze him, how he pulled to free himself and lost his tail in the process. The story, humorous as it is, grew in favour, was told and retold and thus migrated, arriving into regions where the bear was unknown. Meanwhile the origin of the story had been forgotten, and the final sentence, which must have been: 'That is why the bear has no tail to this day,' had no doubt been dropped. Now it is a common feature in popular fiction, noted before in our discussion of the merry tale, that a realistic trait which corresponds to nothing in its new environment, is replaced in the story by some other detail known in its new home. Thus the bear was replaced by the wolf, although the wolf does have a tail. Hence arose the famous episode of the *Roman de Renard* telling of Master Isengrin who goes fishing in the ice and loses his tail.[2]

Nor is it surprising that aetiological stories should present animals talking. As I have said before, no genuine animal story is possible without the tacit assumption that animals act very much like human beings and think logically, and for all we know at this day and age, they do.

The mention of the justly famous Romance of Reynard the Fox will have given some idea of the importance assumed by the animal tale in literature. That romance is, however, rather one of the latest than one of the earliest illustrations for this. It may be said, in fact, that the farther we go back, up the stream of time, the more conspicuous becomes the place taken by aetiological animal tales.

Men in widely separated countries observed that snakes throw off their skin, which led to the belief that snakes are immortal, the change of the skin being really a process of rejuvenation. So the question arose: Why are snakes able to do this whilst man is not? And the answer given was that the snake tricked man out of his immortality, acquiring it for himself. This is the root of the famous myth of the Fall of Man.[3]

It may be supposed that the story of the raven and the dove in connexion with the Jewish Deluge Myth (if it is genuinely Hebrew, which is somewhat doubtful) has no other origin.

The raven (and the crow) and the dove are seen to stand in a sort of opposition in quite a number of countries, evidently because of the great difference in their colouring. Further, there exist a number of aetiological stories purporting to explain why the raven is black, each people or even tribe furnishing an explanation of its own as it were. Thus we are probably not far wrong if we assume that in an older version of the *Genesis* story Noah cursed the raven because he did not come back, and that is why the raven is black but the dove white.

The animal tale is as a rule quite short, and the number of the motives constituting a type are generally few. Yet the different types are in general well-marked and allow of inquiries into their diffusion. The tale of Bear (Wolf) and Fox, of North European origin, clearly shows how such an inquiry has to proceed. The Story of the Fall constitutes another well-marked type, found, besides in Mesopotamia, India, Greece, Sicily, and a large portion of Africa. There can be no question but that an historical connexion must be supposed. The oldest variant occurring in the Babylonian *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the tale is probably of Mesopotamian origin, reaching Africa from the Mediterranean and Egypt.

Sometimes animal tales of strikingly similar form occur in two widely separated regions. A Hungarian story reads as follows:

> When God created the world he gave the horse two horns but no teeth. Conversely, the cow got no horns but two rows of teeth. Being quite defenceless, whilst the horse could after all kick, the cow went to God, saying that since she could neither thrust nor kick he might give her the horns of the horse. In return she was willing to cede to the horse the teeth of her upper jaw. God and the horse agreed, and the exchange was accomplished. Since that time the horse has teeth and the cow horns. The horse always shows its teeth, and the cow shakes her horns.

From Annam hails the following variant:

> Formerly the buffalo had two rows of teeth, but the horse had none. One day they met one another, and the horse asked him to give it the teeth of his upper jaw temporarily so that it might go to a feast. The buffalo agreed, but afterwards the horse refused to return the teeth, unless the buffalo could overtake it in a race. This he could not do, and since that time he has no teeth on his upper jaw.

In spite of certain differences a connexion between the two texts is to be supposed, and O. Dähnhardt [4] concluded, rightly no doubt, that the story was carried to Hungary by wandering gipsies.

On the other hand, the mere fact that the black colour of the raven is due to a curse in the Greek story of Coronis and the episode of *Genesis*, does not prove an historical connexion between the two. Curses are feared almost everywhere in primitive and relatively primitive societies, and the motivation of the curse is entirely different in Greece and Palestine, the raven in the former country being a tell-tale, in the latter rather the opposite.

The stories of *Genesis* and the Greek legend of Coronis and the raven suggest the question: What relation, if any, is there between animal story and myth? We have seen above that in certain cases a myth may develop into a fairy tale and that a merry tale may be told of the Olympians, but neither fact warrants an assumption of a close connexion between myths and those types of popular fiction. On the contrary, their points of contact are purely accidental as it were. The matter stands somewhat differently with the animal tale, as it is unquestionably at the root of what we now call 'myths'; that is, we must assume that animal stories like that of the immortality of snakes and the blackness of the raven, may develop into full-fledged myths. To these facts still another consideration should be added. The Olympian gods and their Celtic and Teutonic counterparts are late-comers in the history of religious development. They were all preceded by more rudimentary concepts, many of which were undoubtedly theriomorphic. Thus Zeus once was an eagle and a woodpecker, Athena an owl, Hera a cow, the Norse Thor a robin, Tyr, like the Roman Mars and the Celtic equivalent of Dispater, a wolf. Thus it stands to reason that the tales told of animals that develop into gods are the direct precursors of the tales told about the gods, i.e. myths. A practical illustration will make this clear.

Robin Redbreast is a so-called 'fire-bird', that is, one of the birds credited with having brought the fire from heaven to earth for the use of Man. The little bird owes this reputation in the last analysis to an aetiological tale explaining its reddish breast. Robin Redbreast later developed, among the Teutonic peoples, into the god of thunder and lightning, which simply means that the 'fire-bird' became a 'fire-god' in human form. The story how Thor provided Man with fire has unfortunately not come down to us, but we may be sure that it resembled, in more than one respect, the Greek tale of Prometheus.

Another fire-bird, in a different region of the globe, is the raven, no doubt on account of its black colour, believed to be the consequence of his helpfulness to man. The raven then developed, among the tribes in question (Eastern Siberia and North-western America) into a *demiourgos* with divine attributes.

The sad tale of Philomela and Prokne as told by Ovid has in large part preserved its aetiological features. The same is true of the story of Arachne and a considerable number of similar metamorphoses, which are moreover by no means limited to the classical world. On the contrary, the Middle Ages knew them as well, though they had no Ovid to put them into verse. Ophelia alludes to one of them, telling how the owl had once been a baker's daughter. Here is the tale, according to a version written down in Gloucestershire.[5]

> Our Lord once went into a baker's shop where they were baking and asked for some bread to eat. The mistress of the shop immediately put a piece of dough in the oven to bake for him but was reprimanded by her daughter, who insisted that the piece of dough was much too large for such a tramp and reduced it to a very small size. The dough, however, immediately began to swell and presently became of a most enormous size, whereupon the baker's daughter cried out: 'Heugh, heugh, heugh!' which owl-wise noise no doubt induced our Lord to transform her into that bird for her wickedness.

It will be readily seen that this tale was not invented by a member of the sedentary population, a 'good citizen', but most probably by a tramp.

According to a different form of the legend the owl was not a baker's daughter but of more illustrious origin, witness the English folk-song:

Once I was a monarch's daughter
And sat on a lady's knee:
But am now a nightly rover,
Banished to the ivy tree.

Crying hoo hoo, hoo hoo, hoo hoo,
Hoo! hoo! hoo! My feet are cold!
Pity me, for here you see me,
Persecuted, poor and old.

I once was a king's daughter
And sat on my father's knee,
But now I'm a poor hoolet,
And hide in a hollow tree![6]

Usually, however, it is not into an owl that the baker's wife or daughter is metamorphosed, but into a woodpecker, and as Dr. Harris has acutely suggested, the reason probably was that the woodpecker has been a rain-maker and thunder-bird from times immemorial. Withholding rain means, in agricultural societies, withholding bread, hence the metamorphosis story.[7]

Whilst the animal tale must thus be considered as one of the most important sources of what goes generally under the name of myths, its influence upon written literatures is even greater, if that is possible. As a matter of fact, the aetiological animal tale may be said to branch out into two equally important types of literature, the Fable and the Beast-Epic.

The original purpose of an animal tale was to explain a natural fact not understood by primitive man ; it may therefore be said to lack any ethical teaching. With the fable matters are different, for it is essentially an animal tale pointing out a moral ; it is thus even more didactic than the aetiological animal tale.

There can be little doubt that the aetiological animal tale preceded the fable in time and that the former developed into the latter under very definite conditions. The transition is clearly recognizable in tales such as the Coronis story of Greek, or the story of Noah and the raven in Hebrew, mythology. The former obviously teaches us to beware of tale-telling, the latter enjoins us to fulfil loyally a commission of trust.

The fable arose in antiquity both in India and Greece, and, an historical connexion being assumed, the question was put forward to which of the two countries must the priority be given. Strange to say, the Indianist Benfey believed in the priority of the Greek fable, whilst E. Rohde, classical scholar though he was, took the opposite view-point.[8]

Inasmuch as both the Indian and the Greek fable show features so remarkably alike and inasmuch as certain well-defined types occur both in India and Greece,[9] an historical connexion of some sort must be supposed. What speaks against Greek and Indian origin alike is the fact that Aesop of doubtful historicity, whom tradition credits with the invention of the Greek fable, was probably no Greek at all, certainly no continental Greek, but in all probability a Semitic slave writing in Ionia. In the second place, fables occur in the oldest portions of the Old Testament,[10] which leads one to suspect that the whole type came to the Ionians from the Semitic East, whence it was also carried to India with so many other elements of Mesopotamian civilization. Certainly, the West and Rome received the impetus from Greece, and the European Middle Ages, as is well known, drew on the Latin fable literature of late Antiquity.

The modern fable has not produced many new types, and even those have never become popular. The German Lessing, in his desire to improve upon La Fontaine, believed terseness of narrative and the moral to be the essential features of the fable.

How mistaken this view is may be seen from the fate of his own fables, all but forgotten. The fable cannot deny its origin. But its parent, the aetiological animal tale, is anything but terse and abstract ; it is pulsating with life, and however elevated the moral of its daughter, the fable, something of that richness must of necessity remain if the type is to live. Hence the vitality of La Fontaine's great work, guided by instinct though he was, and the pure *Lust zum Fabulieren.*

Little need be said about the moral preached in the fables. That they are not the vehicles for elevated ethical, religious and philosophical ideas needs no comment after what has been said above about the moral of the other types of popular fiction. [1] Like all popular art, the fable knows only one philosophy, which is common sense, a rather cruel common sense, perhaps, as for example in La Fontaine's fable about the Grasshopper and the Ant, but common sense all the same. It is significant that though the authors of the New Testament and of the Koran undoubtedly knew fables, as they knew parables, allegories, and proverbs, one would look in vain for them in both books, and even in the Old Testament they occur only in the purely historical portions where the moral is after all a lesson in practical politics, just as in the Indian *Panchatantra.*

The Beast Epic is, in its basic idea, not an invention of the European Middle Ages. Antiquity knew it, though in a less elaborate form, and in that form it was resuscitated in the Renaissance, particularly in Spain.[12] It presupposes the existence of two types, the fable and the epic. The Homeric *Battle of the Frogs and Mice* is simply a mock-epic, and so is in the last analysis the French *Roman de Renard.*[13] Once the aristocracy was gone and with it the spirit that animated its productions, the bourgeoisie had its fling back and caricatured the old epics That is what happened in post-Homeric Greece and in Mediaeval France toward the end of the twelfth century. There is no need to look for any ulterior motivation of the type.

The French Beast-Epic [14] in particular has given an occasion for numerous discussions as to its origin and the origin of its constituent elements. The two questions of course bear on quite different points, since the elements are usually far older than the literary composition which they help to form. In the French Romance of the Fox particularly opinions have been sharply divided. Jacob Grimm [15] in the last century saw everywhere ancient Teutonic animal stories of considerable antiquity and poetic power. W. Scherer[16] and, in our own generation, M. Lucien Foulet pointed out the numerous influences of the

Latin fable and even of certain collections of *exempla* such as the *Disciplina clericalis.* The truth, as usual, lies about midway between the two extremes. A number of the episodes found in the *Roman de Renard* are unquestionably literary borrowings, whilst others, for example the tale of the fishing wolf, represent ancient types of aetiological tales, current in Europe no doubt long before the period of the Teutonic migrations.

A word or two must be said about the aetiological plant tale and the plant fable,[17] derived from it just as the animal fable is derived from the animal tale. Aetiological stories about plants are, of course, quite as common as aetiological animal tales, though often enough, to be sure, we shall find animals and plants mixed among the actors of the story. To show what I mean, I quote here an English story representing this type.

> The cormorant was once upon a time a wool-merchant who went into partnership with the bramble and the bat. Together they freighted a large ship with wool; but she was wrecked, and the firm became bankrupt. Hence it is that the bat sulks about till midnight, to avoid his creditors, the cormorant is forever diving into the deep to discover the foundered vessel, whilst the bramble seizes hold of every passing sheep to make up his loss by stealing the wool.

From the aetiological plant tale arose the plant fable at a very early date. One of the oldest specimens in existence is the famous fable of Jotham discussed by Sir James G. Frazer in a masterly study.[18]

Abimelech, a son of Gideon, had slaughtered all his brothers but one in approved Oriental fashion and thereupon seized the crown by demagogic tricks as simple as they were crude. The one surviving brother, Jotham, then came forth from his hiding and addressed the men of Shechem from Mt. Gerizim by telling them the following fable:

> Once upon a time the trees went forth to anoint a king over them, and they said unto the olive-tree, Reign thou over us. But the olive-tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness wherewith by me they honour God and man and go to wave to and fro over the trees? And the trees said unto the fig-tree, Come thou and reign over us. But the fig-tree said unto them, Should I leave my sweetness and my good fruit and go to wave to and fro over the trees? And the trees said unto the vine, Come thou and reign over us. But the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine which cheereth God and man, and go to wave to and fro over the trees? Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou and reign over us. And the bramble said unto them, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my

shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble and devour the cedars of Lebanon.

Jotham then fled before he could be reached and arrested.

Sir James, who quotes a number of Hellenic parallels, interprets the moral of the fable to be a bloody satire on monarchy, and it is in this point that I venture to differ with my illustrious contemporary. Abimelech certainly does not represent the sacrosanct institution of monarchy approved by gods and men as we find it in the later history of Israel and in the Homeric epic. Had Aristotle known this episode and used Jewish illustrations in his *Politics* he would have classed him among the 'tyrants', i.e. that odious class of ambitious men who seized the rule of the ancient city-state by tricks of cheap demagogy and who used their ill-gotten power for the chief purpose of enriching themselves at the expense of the aristocracy, oppressed, banished, or slaughtered by them and the blind mob, always at the beck and call of men of this type.

However that may be, the Old Testament episode in question attests the antiquity of the *genre*. If in spite of this the plant fable has at no time been quite as popular as the animal fable, the reason must be sought, I believe, in the strain imposed upon the imagination when representing plants as walking and acting and discoursing, a strain far less pronounced, of course, in the case of the animal fable.

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[2] K. Krohn, *Bär und Fuchs*, Helsingfors, 1891; Aarne-Thompson, p. 22.

[3] Sir J. G. Frazer, *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament*, London, 1918, I, 45 sqq. and my additional notes in *A.J.S.L.L.*, XLIII, 236–9, and *N.T.T.*, XVII, 242–9.

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[5] T. H. T. Dyer, *Folk-Lore of Shakespeare*, London, 1883, p. 133 sq.; B. Thorpe, *Northern Mythology*, London, 1851–2, II, 25; cf. also III, 131; Dähnhardt, *Natursagen*, II, 129 sqq.

[6] C. Swainson, *The Folk-Lore and Provincial Names of British Birds*, London, 1886, p. 123 sq.

[7] Rendel Harris, *Picus who is also Zeus*, Cambridge, 1916, pp. 28, 41, 45 sqq.

[8] The reader will find an excellent discussion of the problems involved in Bédier, *Les Fabliaux* (1925), pp. 94 sqq.; further J. Jacobs, *The Fables of Aesop*, London, 1889.

[9] On the types of the ancient Greek and Roman fable, cf. the excellent work of W. Wienert, *Die Typen der griechisch-römischen Fabel* (*F.F.C.* 56). A similar survey for the Indian and Semitic fable would be highly desirable.

[10] The most famous is probably the fable of Jotham in *Judges*, IX, 7–15.

[11] Cf. Remy de Gourmont, *La vie des animaux et la morale dans les fables de La Fontaine, Mercure de France*, 1905, LVII, 510 sqq.; LVIII, 24 sqq.

[12] Ernest Mérimée, *Précis d'histoire de la littérature espagnole*, Paris, 1908, p. 233.

[13] *Le Roman de Renart*, p.p. Ernest Martin, Strasbourg, 1882–7.

[14] The best study on the subject, in spite of a certain lopsidedness, is Lucien Foulet, *Le Roman de Renard*, Paris, 1914.

[15] *Reinhart Fuchs*, Berlin, 1834.

[16] W. Scherer, *Jacob Grimm*, Berlin, 1865, p. 152.

[17] A. Wünsche, *Die Pflanzenfabel in der Weltliteratur*, Leipzig-Wien, 1905.

[18] *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament*, II, 471 sqq.

CHAPTER IV

THE LOCAL LEGEND

FAIRY tale, merry tale, and animal tale have for a common feature their diffusion from one definite point of our planet. The point of their origin is usually unknown, and it requires as a rule special investigations to determine it. The theory of polygenesis may at the most be admitted as a possibility for certain merry tales of a fairly simple structure and presupposing rather rudimentary relationships between individuals. Local legends, on the other hand, are attached to a definite locality, where they arose at a time not easy to determine off-hand and where they linger on for centuries. They are fixed, as it were, in place at least, if not in time. They do not migrate. It follows that if identical local legends exist in different parts of the globe no historical connexion need have existed, and the theory of polygenesis will as a rule account for them, certainly when they can be shown to have grown out of some common and fairly rudimentary basis and according to the most general laws of human psychology. With the animal tales they share the aetiological element present in the vast majority of them.

Local legends are tied to the landscape in which they arise. Usually they were invented to explain some uncommon feature in that very landscape. This feature remaining, the aetiological legend remains with it. Were the feature to disappear, owing to some change in the earth's surface, the legend would disappear likewise. Local legends are transmitted from generation to generation in that neighbourhood, with little or no modification. When transmitted to outsiders, as happens often enough when the informants are the local *ciceroni* and the strangers sight-seers, the legend is as a rule quickly forgotten by the strangers who heard it, unless they happen to be antiquarians or—folklorists. This fact largely explains the fixity of local legends. The same applies to legends attempting to explain a name, usually by way of folk-etymology. *Out of sight, out of mind*, certainly holds true for this particular production of the popular genius.

Local legends are brief, their motives few and for ever recurring. It is quite possible that a given motive also has a certain territory of its own, however wide that may be. But so far extremely little has been done in this field. Nor has the collection of local legends been undertaken systematically so far. Central Europe,[1] Denmark,[2] Iceland,[3] and the British Isles [4] have been best taken care of. Scandinavia proper, where so much has been done in recent years for the exploration of the European fairy tale, is but poorly represented in this field ; Southern Europe is even worse off.[5] Once the material is available, the cartographical method of determining the territory of each motive would no doubt be the best ; it is to be hoped that these tasks will be undertaken in the not too distant future.

A few examples will best show the ubiquity of the motives under consideration. Wherever there is a certain impression in a rock, the story runs that it is the footprint of some famous individual. The classical example is no doubt Adam's Peak in Ceylon ; but the story occurs over a large part of Europe. If the impression resembles the shape of the human hand, it was caused by an ‘ act of truth ’, as in the case of the famous stone near the Welfsholz. Count Hoyer of Mansfield, general of Henry V (1106–1125), swore on the eve of the battle that he could no more be overcome than the rock could take the imprint of his head ; the rock gave way, still showing the imprint, and he lost the battle, being slain himself.

The chain of sandbanks between India and Ceylon is variously called Adam's Bridge or Rama's Causeway and has given rise to the famous legend of Rama's campaign at the head of an army of monkeys with which he crossed over to the island. As the hero himself remarks in the great epic that bears his name :

> See, my love, round Ceylon's island
> How the ocean billows roar,
> Hiding pearls in caves of coral,
> Strewing shells upon the shore,
> And the causeway far extending,—
> Monument of Rama's fame,—
> Râmasetu unto ages
> Shall our deathless deed proclaim.

Wherever there is a lake, it is rumoured to be ‘ bottomless ’ ; attempts at measuring its exact depth turn out disastrous for the men engaged in such an enterprise. Usually a castle or a convent had formerly stood on an island in the middle of the lake, but it was overwhelmed by the floods, on account of the godlessness of its inhabitants.

Wherever there is an isolated boulder-stone or a hillock, it had been lost by some giantess who was carrying it for one purpose or another.

Legends narrating dragon-fights are to be found almost anywhere in Europe, and no less common are stories concerning a foundation sacrifice before the erection of a building, castle, cathedral, or bridge.[6]

In mountainous regions it is difficult not to find a precipice from which it is fabled that some human being has leaped, a knight pursued by the enemy, or a virgin fleeing from her captor. The leap may end with disaster, or the fugitive may be saved by a miracle.

Near the sea-shore we find in the place of the submerged castle the sunken city, destroyed on account of the wickedness of the inhabitants. Legends of this type were current on the north shore of the Peloponnesus, in Achaia, as we know, thanks to that indefatigable collector of legends, Pausanias.[7] They are found to this day along the coasts of France and Germany.

What historical value is to be attributed to legends of this character? If one is to believe the opinions of the Anthropological School, that value is not to be underrated. Folk-memory, they tell us, has a curious tenacity and when aided, as in the case of local legends it naturally is, by something tangible, a ruined castle or a deep pond or lake, it may preserve historical facts, if not quite as well as a chronicler, at least with a certain degree of dependability and even accuracy.

It is to be noted that this view is borne out by certain well-ascertained facts, though on a somewhat more modest scale than some of our more enthusiastic friends of that school are inclined to believe. Archaeological evidence justifies the assumption that the sea did snatch off a portion of the Achaian coast, overwhelming two cities. A similar state of facts obtains for the Copaic Lake in Boeotia. The Dutch legends of floods destroying whole cities are certainly not idle inventions, and behind the German, or rather Slavonic, Vineta on the Pomeranian coast lurks the ancient city of Julin, destroyed either by floods or by pirates. A similar state of facts appears to obtain for the famous Breton legend of the sunken city of Is; for the Geographer of Ravenna reports a city called Chris or Keris standing in that neighbourhood, and in the sixteenth century the canon Moreau wrote: 'There are still old people who assure us that at low tide, when out on fishing, they have seen the old ruins of the walls.'[8] A still better example and one known to all readers of the present work is the famous story of Sodom and Gomorrah. There can of course be no question about the fact that it belongs to precisely this class of legends; and the wickedness of the inhabitants, as fictitious as that of the people of Vineta and Is, merely serves to motivate the ruin of the two cities. About that catastrophe itself there can be little doubt, for the geological formation of the Jordan Valley, the depression filled by the Dead Sea and its continuation, the Red Sea, and some of the East African Lakes, renders events of this type extremely likely, if due allowance is made for poetic embellishments such as the fire falling from heaven. But it would be odd were one to assume that every such legend points to an historical city or castle or convent; there would then be more such places below the sea than on land, and the very idea is manifestly absurd. Apart from historical reminiscences, which certainly do not cover even half of all cases, two other factors must be considered, namely, geological inferences and migration of motives. As Sir J. G. Frazer has shown,[9] one need not be a trained geologist to draw, from a number of indicia, the inference that where there is now dry land there was once water, or that where there is now some body of water there was once dry land. Elsewhere certain rocks were mistaken for walls. For example, at St. Malo old sailors believed they saw the city of Chausey built on 300 hills which became cliffs. Some thought that in the same way they could discern even the roofs of the houses and the steeples of the churches of the town overwhelmed by a sudden cataclysm.[10] Lastly, it stands to reason that in a limited territory there should have been enough interchange, in the course of centuries, to acquaint most localities, if not with all the details of their neighbours' tales, at least with the general motives, and this would naturally make for a certain uniformity of types throughout a given locality.

The motivation of the catastrophe, the impiety of the inhabitants, though occurring in the Old Testament, is yet typically mediaeval. How the ancient Mediterraneans conceived of this matter may be conveniently seen from the ancient Italian legend (though probably of learned or semi-learned origin) connected with a flood of the Alban lake. A certain king of Alba Longa, variously called Romulus, Remulus, or Amulius Silvius, set up for being a god in human form, mimicking Jupiter's thunder and lightning flash (reminiscences of an old rain charm). For this impious act he and his palace were struck by the avenging bolt, and the Alban lake flooded and drowned the palace. One of the ancient chroniclers even records the fact that at low water and with a calm surface of the lake one could still see the ruins of the palace at the lake bottom. As will be readily seen, this ancient story is an absolute pendant to the mediaeval stories passed in review, but the ancient crime of *hubris* here takes the place of the wantonness which characterizes the mediaeval inhabitants of the drowned city.[11]

Again in the case of the stories about foundation sacrifices, skeletons have actually been found at the demolition of buildings about which such stories were current. What must be remembered is that the foundation sacrifice is a very tenacious survival which was found lingering in Northern Germany as late as the nineteenth century. This being the case, it is natural to suppose that popular opinion took for granted that such a sacrifice had been made at the foundation of almost any imposing structure which loomed up in the background of the landscape; and it is equally natural, seeing the wide diffusion of the custom in question, that at the demolition of many a building the traces of such a sacrifice should have come to light, thus confirming the common view.

Closely related to the idea of the foundation sacrifice is the notion that a hero buried after his death at the gate of a city or on the frontier of a country will protect the city from capture and the country from invasion. Thus Eurystheus, in Euripides' *Heraclidae*, before being put to death by order of Alkmena, promises the Athenians, in gratitude for their kind intercession in his favour, forever to protect their territory against his (and their) Peloponnesian foes; and curiously enough, his body and severed head were actually buried separately and a good distance apart in two strategically important points. Now if practically the same legend occurs in Northern Europe, in the Britain of Nennius, in Mediaeval Ireland, and in Scandinavia, there is no need whatever to postulate classical influences. On the contrary, the underlying idea of hero cult and hero worship (which in the Middle Ages will turn into saints' cult and saints' worship) will sufficiently account for independent growth. This fundamental fact, on the other hand, does not preclude the possibility of purely literary borrowings, once the custom had grown into a legend which had found its way into literature. A careful comparison of the variants will as a rule settle this point.

In the case of the stories relating the deadly leap, whether the outcome be happy or the reverse, one might think of customs such as the well-known Greek leap from the White Rock. That a similar rite may have existed in Northern and Central Europe cannot be gainsaid, either in cases of suicide or as a punishment of grave crimes. The general custom may have given rise to legends of this type; but it would certainly be most venturesome to affirm that near every rock about which a story of this nature is current the rite in question was once practised also. On the contrary, when once told about a certain abrupt cliff, the motive would easily become attached also to a neighbouring cliff.

Of certain other types of local legends we definitely know the origin, which is anything but historical. Thus whenever a population finds in a newly-settled country huge monuments built by the former inhabitants, it almost automatically attributes those ruins to supernatural beings, giants, fairies, the Devil, or, in the Orient, the jinn. The dolmens of France and the British Isles are the work of the fairies ; the remnants of the Roman *limes* are attributed by German peasants to the Devil, who divided the earth with our Lord and erected the wall to mark the boundary. The ruins of the Roman amphitheatres of Southern France are called the ' palais de Galienne ', Galienne being a powerful Moorish princess and the wife of Charlemagne. To the fellahîm of Modern Egypt the Pyramids are the work of the jinn ; to the Rumelian peasants the Hellenic structures are the works of giants ; and in the regions near the lower Danube such ruins are attributed to none other than the great Trajan, the conqueror of Dacia. The psychological process responsible for such fancies is of course evident. To any people that has its days of splendour behind it the monuments of its great ancestors appear supernatural when gauged by its own impotence. I have no doubt but that some day the tiller of the American soil in the fourth millennium will form no other opinion about the origin of the Woolworth Building.

But even when there is a definite historical event at the bottom of a given tradition, one must bear in mind that the legend will at the most have preserved the kernel of the happening, nothing more. Where the opposite is found to hold, one must inevitably reckon with learned influences. Memories of battles will linger for a considerable time after. If Louis Hémon is to be believed, there was an old crone still living near Waterloo in 1913, who as a little girl had witnessed the great battle and seen the Emperor at a distance. But it is virtually certain that that old woman knew very little of what it was all about. All she knew was probably as much or as little as Old Kaspar remembered of the battle of Blenheim, namely, ' that it was a famous victory '. To look for more in popular tradition is folly. A good instance is furnished by the legend of Roncevaux, the origin, as is well known, of the famous *Song of Roland*. In the mountainous defile in the Pyrenees there lingered, for centuries afterwards, the memory of a battle, ending with a defeat of the ' outsiders ', i.e. in this case the Franks. There also was shown a gap in the rock about which the story ran that one of the strange knights, no doubt a giant, rather than lose his sword, also of gigantic proportions, had tried to destroy it by dashing it against the rock; but it was such a huge and such an excellent sword that it split the rock, hence the gap. The legend would never have developed further had there not been a monastery in the neighbourhood, with monks anxious to attract visitors, i.e. pilgrims. The monks knew what the battle had been about, having at their disposal Einhard's *Vita Caroli*. So they set to work elaborating it by fusing the popular with the learned version. Such a combination formed the basis of the famous epic, as M. Bédier has shown most convincingly.[12]

Another apparent exception to the above-mentioned rule of the limitations of folk-memory in connexion with local legends may be found in what for want of a better name I shall call 'family legends'. There are few old Irish families who do not have their own banshee, i.e. a sort of family spirit giving notice, by its apparition, of an impending death in the family. Nor is this belief peculiarly Irish or even Celtic. It is found with the same frequency on the European continent. Most princely families, including the Hohenzollerns, have or had such a family spirit. But with the mere statements concerning the existence of the banshee and her periodical apparitions the purely popular part of the legend may be said to end. With what is further related, about how that spirit came into being, why it haunts that particular family, etc., the popular legend has nothing to do. These details again come from the upper strata, in the shape of family chronicles, family histories, accounts of local wars, etc. Occasionally, such accounts would penetrate among the people proper without, however, gaining any genuine popularity. How old those elaborate legends are, it is difficult to tell. The whole subject deserves a good monograph. It may be said, however, that the majority of them have a peculiarly seventeenth- and eighteenth-century flavour. The banshee is as a rule a discarded mistress, revenging herself on the former object of her affection and upon his family in the afore-mentioned fashion.

This close interrelationship between popular and learned traditions is noticeable in still other ways. With the general illiteracy prevailing all through the Middle Ages and down to relatively modern times books were of course of little influence. There was one book, however, with the contents of which even the humble and lowly were quite familiar, the Bible, preached to them Sunday after Sunday. Accordingly, one is not surprised to find a large number of Biblical reminiscences in local legends all over Europe, whilst certain ones may safely be considered as direct replicas of Biblical, especially Old Testament, narratives. In local legends reporting the destruction of cities Sodom and Gomorrah furnished the prototype, and it is to be suspected that if the wickedness of the inhabitants of such overwhelmed sites is emphasized, the Biblical story has more to do with it than any factor, historical or other. Again, when a local legend relates how a person or a group of persons was swallowed up by the earth, the legend of Dathan and Abiram was no doubt the model. There are local legends relating the crumbling of walls at the approach of the enemy host, modelled obviously upon the story of the taking of Jericho, and tales reporting how a host safely forded a river or a branch of the sea, with the water ceasing to flow, have their archetype in the narrative of *Exodus*.

Whilst I shall thus be found to reduce the historical element in local legends to a very minimum, I do not mean to imply that such legends are of little value. There are other advantages to be gleaned besides the collection of historical facts, on which the chronicles are bound, at any rate, to give more dependable information. Local legends often explain rites which have fallen into disuse and are apt to throw an important light on their nature. The classical example for English readers is doubtless the tale of Lady Godiva, treated in so masterly a manner by the late E. S. Hartland.[13] That story, it will be recalled, is but an aetiological tale invented to explain an agricultural rite in which the procession of a naked woman formed a sort of climax.

Of a similar character are certain stories quite widespread in Central Europe, particularly Southern Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. They tell how on a certain occasion a city was hard pressed by a besieging host and all seemed lost when the women, led by some Amazon, came to the fore, joined the ranks of the faltering men and by their courage and resolution won a splendid victory. In gratitude, the tale will add, the city council in a solemn session decreed certain honours to the fair sex, usually in the form of a festival in which the women alone participate, or granted them some other privileges. It is of course obvious that these tales were invented *ad hoc*, i.e., to explain the very existence of festivals of that nature or of privileges not generally accorded to mediaeval womenfolk. In reality these festivals are most probably survivals of pagan rites, corresponding to the Greek Thesmophoria, which, having to do with ideas of fertility, had to be carried out by the women and from which all men were excluded.

The quite numerous legends, frequent especially on the Continent and relating how a group of people were cursed by some saint or an ecclesiastic for dancing on a holiday and are now condemned to reappear on that fatal day and to dance frantically at the midnight hour, point to the existence of mediaeval fairs with pagan ritual dancing (as survivals, no doubt) suppressed by the clergy.[14]

The equally common tales of the witch-ride on the night of St. Walpurgis (May 1st) to the Hartz Mountain or (in Sweden) to the heath of Blåkulla tend to prove the lingering of pagan feasts on the day of the Celtic Beltain down to Christian times and their final suppression by the clergy, which converted the pagan divinities into devils and the human participants into witches. That pagan cults continued to live on, in the form of mysteries, long after the introduction of Christianity, admits of little doubt. We know from the parallel development in Greece that the mysteries originated as the feasts and rites of a suppressed faith.[15] On the other hand, it is well to note that according to the Arabic geographer Ibn Haukal, who wrote in A.D. 976, the Persian wizards used to resort to Mt. Demâvend, the old Olympus of the pre-Zoroastrian faith :

> Multae de eo (monte Dainawend) fabulae narrantur; in his, praestigiatores ex omnibus orbis terrarum partibus huc se conferre solere. (Ed. Uylenbroek, p. 9.)

The Christian clergy did not only alter older material, thereby shaping modern folk-lore; it introduced new types of local legends from the Mediterranean countries. To these belong the numerous tales of the saint putting his staff in the ground and a spring gushing forth, the stories of holy images that laugh, weep, sweat, bleed, nod, and return to their old place when once removed, all found in the classical writers of Greece and Rome. It is impossible to separate legends of this character from the miracles of Our Lady and the saints, so flourishing in the Middle Ages, where their purely Christian and mediaeval, not to say clerical, character is evident. Again it is unnecessary to assume that each variant presupposes an original invention. The general uniformity of the types rather proves that there was a certain amount of diffusion over limited territories or regions. Nor is the element of time, when added (as is not usually the case), of any importance. For example, the well-known type of the robber who shoots at a crucifix but is killed by his own bullet which rebounds upon himself, was retold to me, some twelve years ago, by a little Belgian girl and a refugee, the event being placed in the neighbourhood of Malines and in the opening months of the Great War.

A considerable number of local legends have their origin in popular superstition, about which more anon. Thus the stories relating to the charming of witches and thieves, to freemasons, exorcists and magic books (the famous *Agrippa*, for example), to mothers who died in childbirth returning to nourish their child, to 'spook' animals, to so-called 'second sight', unquestionably grew out of a very practical belief in these things and serve as it were to justify the very superstitions upon which they are based. If one inquires into beliefs and practices of that sort, one is sure to hear the corresponding local legends 'proving' their good foundation.

Not a few local legends are clearly the outcome of dream experiences of the same sort as were mentioned before in the chapter dealing with the fairy tale. Such are the stories about the nightmare, the motive of carrying the person to be redeemed, the motive of the Riddle of the Sphinx, equally common in local legends, and the motive of the pursuit by demons. The theme, best known perhaps through the Oriental story of Sindbad the Sailor, of the Old Man of the Sea, is very common in local legends hailing from all parts of the European continent; it has no other origin.

Certain local legends presuppose popular fancies of a truly venerable age. Thus, for example, the type of the Wild Hunt, found all over Central Europe, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, and North-eastern France, goes ultimately back to the notion that the dead ride in the nightwind and on these occasions vent their spite (which all the dead, in primitive belief, are supposed to harbour toward the living) on the wanderer who is unlucky enough to run across their path without observing the necessary precautions. This notion is not particularly Teutonic, as is often believed; on the contrary, it is found in classical Greece, where it is connected with the name of Hekate, and in Ancient India, where the famous prelude to the *Râmâyana* grew out of it, just as in Bavaria the corresponding legend of King Watzmann is a direct descendant of the same set of ideas. The demon leader of the wild host is apt to become, quite independently in different regions, a godless prince who by his ruthlessness brings down upon himself the curse of a saint or hermit.[16]

Equally ancient is the type of the water-sprite appearing in the shape of a water-bull or water-horse who drags the unwary mortal with him into the depths of some swamp or lake. Occurring in a hundred local variants all over the European continent and parts of Asia, it is ultimately at the basis of the famous story of the end of King Theodoric, led away by a demonic horse from which he could not dismount.[17]

Many local legends are the outcome of optical illusions, peculiar to a certain locality, repeated time and again and finally assuming definite shape and form. Of this type must be reckoned the legend of the fog-dwarf, localized in the neighbourhood of Lake Constance, and the French type of the ghostly laundrywomen, washing their linen, in the dead of night, near some brook or lake. They are supposed to be mothers who have secretly killed their illegitimate children. The widespread type of the will-o'-the-wisp has its origin in the well-known phenomenon of phosphorescence so common around moors and bogs. The fancy of the fiery men condemned to carry the boundary stones which in their lifetime they had moved back to increase their own fields at the expense of their neighbours, must be sought in a similar phenomenon.

Certain places favour auricular deceptions, usually by an echo. In this way originate tales relating how a phantom sneezes or recites a stanza, incompletely, of course, and waits for a charitable passer-by to say, "God bless you"! or to complete the stanza for him. When elaborated further, such stories will tell how a priest is condemned to haunt an old and deserted chapel celebrating mass night after night, or only on a certain night in the year, because during his lifetime he had been negligent in his duties. He is redeemed when a man chances to come to the chapel and is in a state and willing to receive holy communion at his hands.[18] Auricular deceptions also originated the North and Central European variants of the Death of Pan. A voice calls out to a passing farmer to report at home that So-and-So has died. The farmer repeats the story at home to his family, and immediately a wailing is heard outside.[19] I might add that certain scholars have attributed the origin of the legends concerning the Wild Hunt to the noise made by wild geese or cranes when flying over Central Europe on their migration to and from the Mediterranean.[20]

Purely subjective phenomena are largely or partly responsible for legends about werewolves (lycanthropy), the Danish *Ellerkonge* resulting in Goethe's well-known poem, and for the type of the man who was carried off to great distances by the Wild Hunt or by a procession of fairies or witches. Thus in seventeenth-century Germany the Ritter von Scharfenstein all of a sudden disappeared and returned years afterwards, stating that witches had abducted him through the air, from the Rhine, and deposited him somewhere in Turkey, whence he had to return to Germany on foot. What had happened to the good man was simply a mental disturbance accompanied by a complete loss of memory concerning his own identity.[21] Such phenomena are by no means rare, and a fairly spectacular case occurred only a few years ago in the American city of St. Paul, in the State of Minnesota, the hero being, characteristically enough, not a knight but a Protestant minister of the Gospel. Rumour had it that there, too, witches were involved, though I do not doubt that if such was the case they were of a more prepossessing exterior than those of the German story. However that may be, Victor Hugo elaborated a legend of this general type, including it in his masterpiece *Le Rhin*, one of the jewels of Romantic prose.[22]

A word must be said about the so-called historical legends. They are no doubt so named because there is nothing historical about them. As a matter of fact, they are usually indistinguishable from anecdotes. To give an English example: the tale of the King and the Miller of the Dee calls the monarch 'Hal': but it is impossible to tell which Henry is meant. One might with equal plausibility argue for any one of the English Henrys, from Henry I to Henry VIII, though I suspect that the narrator who first made mention of that name thought of Henry VI and was guided by a Shakesperian reminiscence, since in the third part of *King Henry VI* that monarch is made to philosophize in much the same strain.[23] The tale of the Emperor and the Abbot, as shown by Dr. Anderson, has been ascribed to more than a dozen monarchs, from an Egyptian Pharaoh to Frederick the Great. In Prussian Silesia the same tale is often found attributed to Charles XII and Frederick II, since both monarchs appeared as saviours to the Silesian Protestants oppressed as they were by the Hapsburgs, and a story told of Brian Boru in Southern Ireland may be ascribed to William III by an Orangeman. Quite apart from these facts, which would after all affect only the historicity of the legend, one has often enough reason to doubt even its popularity. It is generally admitted, for instance, that a certain portion of the ancient Alexander stories were actually fostered, if not invented, by Alexander himself. The same is probably true of Napoleon I, and in more modern times certain tottering dynasties have thought it convenient to encumber text-books used in the public schools with this type of pseudo-history and pseudo-folk-lore. Nor are such tendencies peculiar to monarchies. Fairly recent events in the United States have shown what store is set, in certain circles, by the propagation of such rubbish when accidentally connected with names as illustrious as that of George Washington.

A very good illustration for the half-literary character of historical legends attached to the name of some great ruler, an illustration, at the same time, which has not yet become hackneyed from all too frequent use in treatises on folk-lore, is furnished by a story localized in the Silesian town of Liegnitz and attached variously to Charles XII and Frederick II.

The monarch one evening arrived, dressed in a simple soldier's uniform, at a certain inn in that town but was roughly turned down by the landlord on the pretext that the inn was filled up. A charitable chambermaid afterwards gave him entrance into a barn behind the house. The following morning the king rose up early and wrote on the door of the inn the following quite untranslatable verse :

Wenn mancher Mann wüsste, wer mancher Mann wär,
Gäb mancher Mann manchem Mann manchmal mehr Ehr.
Da mancher Mann nicht weiss, wer mancher Mann ist,
Mancher Mann manchen Mann manchmal vergisst.

The tale has all the earmarks of an aetiological story meant to explain the origin of a popular rhyme, or mayhap a rhyme of literary origin, the true genesis of which had been forgotten. To hunt for any historical nucleus of the legend is as idle as looking for George Washington's cherry-tree.

Related to historical legends, at least in a certain measure, are stories told about coats-of-arms, ensigns, battle-cries, watchwords, and armorial bearings. They are all without exception aetiological tales, meant to explain something the true origin of which was either entirely unknown or at least hidden from the people on account of their lack of historical knowledge. The famous garden scene at the beginning of the Wars of the Roses has probably no other origin.

Essentially aetiological also are certain legends attached to some statue or monument. A famous example is that of the Count of Gleichen, in Erfurt, Thuringia, with his monument in some local chapel. From the fact that there are two female statues on each side of a knight in reclining position the inference was drawn that he had lived in bigamy, and to explain this unusual fact, ordinarily highly shocking to European and American morals, it was fabled that he had been taken prisoner by the Saracens in the Holy Land but had managed to escape because the sultan's daughter had fallen in love with him. To regain his liberty he had promised her to marry her, keeping silent, as a prudent man, about the important fact that his first wife was waiting in Germany for his return, or, according to a variant, telling her all about it only to discover that as a pious Mohammedan she saw no obstacle whatever to her own plans in the circumstance in question. So matters were settled between the two. Fortune smiled on them ; they managed to get to Italy in safety, where the Pope arranged matters to the satisfaction of all parties concerned and, more miraculous still, the two wives did not show the least bit of jealousy for one another.[24]

Among the legends that may be said to have a general historical foundation one must count two more classes, namely, treasure stories and tales about outlaws. Stories of buried treasure-trove are found all over the Old World. They can be said to be as popular with the modern peasants as they were with the Arabs at the time when the *Nights* were first put into shape. The general truth underneath this type is no doubt the fact that before the rise of commercialism Mother Earth was found to be the safest bank, and accordingly people did not hesitate, in time of trouble, to bury their currency and their valuables. Often enough it then happened that these were dug up by a late-comer, the rightful owners having been massacred or died a natural death before they had a chance to return to the spot. What is told about the methods of finding the place where treasure-trove is hidden and of unearthing it is largely due to diffusion, and the rites employed are in large part Oriental importations, i.e. pseudo-scientific in origin and of late date.

The second group, all but extinct except in certain regions such as Iceland, Corsica, Spain, and the Balkans, are stories about bandits or outlaws. The reason for their disappearance is obvious. Banditry, in Western and Central Europe, is a thing of the past, and when tales of this type still flourished in England, as they did as late as the eighteenth century, there was no one to put them down on paper. Only from bits of contemporary literature, in particular certain novels of Walter Scott, can we obtain an idea of what they were like. With the Icelandic judicial system the outlaws played a major rôle in the life and letters of the island, at least down to the end of the saga period. It is to be noted, however, that a good number of the more modern *útilegumannasögur*, as they are called, are Irish fairy legends of undoubted Celtic origin which have migrated to the lonely isle in the Far North.[25] What part the Corsican and Albanese outlaw-tales have played in the history of literature through the works of Prosper Mérimée and Lord Byron is too well known to need recounting.

A large group, and a very large one, to be sure, of local legends owes its existence to folk-etymology, i.e. the false interpretation given to a place-name the correct etymology of which was no longer understood. The false etymology then led to the invention of an aetiological tale to explain the strange name. I shall mention here only a few. In Württemberg there is an old castle (a strong mediaeval fortress) called *Achalm*, evidently derived from a root related to the Latin *aqua* and found in Celtic and Teutonic as well as in Latin and Greek. This insight, which dates, of course, from the time of Franz Bopp in the last century, is even now the exclusive property of the 'learned'. Not being understood, the word was responsible for the following quite picturesque legend. A traveller, so it runs, was set upon by robbers on that spot. Wounded to death he wanted to cry out 'Ach, Allmächtiger'; but he just managed to pronounce the first two syllables, hence the name of the place where it happened.

In Modern Attica there are two places called *Stamata* and *Psychiko* respectively. To explain them, they were brought into relation with the story of the runner of Marathon, who in the first of the two places is said to have been told by a woman '*σταμάτα*' (stop !) and in the second to have been on the point of giving up the ghost (*ψυχή*).[26]

Stephen of Byzantium relates after Philo of Byblos that Laodicea Syriaca was formerly named '*Ράμιθα*, because once upon a time a shepherd on being struck by lightning called out '*Ραμάνθας!*

Nor must the etymology necessarily be false. In Mecklenburg there is a village called *Smrt*, to which is attached the legend of a terrible plague from which all the inhabitants of the place died to a man. Now *Smrt* is a well-known Slavonic word meaning 'death', and the story must therefore go back to a time when the Slavonic dialect was still spoken in Mecklenburg, that is, several centuries ago, unless one is willing to assume that some wandering Pole interpreted the name to the German inhabitants, who thereupon made up the story.

As has been said above, the local legend is short. With the merry tale it shares an essentially episodical structure; the tales about outlaws are the only ones that at times show a biographical tendency; but then the type merges into that of the prose saga, of which more later on. Though undoubtedly tending toward the melodramatic, the happy ending is not a pre-requisite. On the contrary, quite a number of local legends end tragically, as for example the stories of the water-horse drowning the hero; and also the treasure stories do not lead as a rule to a successful end. Of the redemption tales, too, a good many have no happy outcome. When it is a question of a nightly encounter, the hero escapes as a rule, to tell the tale, but his life is apt to be short after that; his days are numbered. At the base of this peculiarity lies of course the widespread belief that the sight of a supernatural being means death, a belief of which traces are found in the Old Testament.

Local legends are no more devoid of didacticism and moral teaching than all other types of popular fiction. In a good number of them this didacticism and the moral preoccupation of the teller may be said to be somewhat obtrusive. The moral code expounded is not that of the New Testament, as goes without saying, but a quite different one and much older, no doubt. One of the major crimes is the sin of destroying food or of merely wasting it. The Tyrolese Frau Hütt is transformed into stone on that account, and some Swiss shepherds fare even worse. No doubt we have here the innate feelings of the peasant class, so hostile to waste. The chief sin of the people of Vineta and other doomed cities is their excessive luxury: they are said to have paved their streets with silver and gold. Such stories reveal the natural hostility of the peasant toward what he regards, rightly or wrongly, as the superfluous luxury of the city-dweller. Filial ingratitude is severely censored; the hand that struck the parent grows out of the tomb, in spite of all efforts to bury it. An oath is treated as something of the utmost seriousness, no doubt because its original character as a curse to befall the oath-taker in case his statement is false is still vivid in the peasant's mind. Persons guilty of perjury are compelled to haunt the object of their crime, usually a piece of land for the sake of which they incurred that sin. Infanticide is frowned upon, witness the tales of the ghostly laundrywomen. Artificial or, what is worse, magic means to produce sterility in women are severely condemned; and the failure to have given life to the number of human beings allotted, as is believed, by fate to every woman, is considered a serious crime. A certain story type, though migratory rather than local,[27] leaves no doubt about this fairly primitive view of the European peasant. Chastity, or rather virginity, is credited with magical rather than merely ethical properties. The youth can find the treasure hollow in the mountain just as long as he is in that state; once he has lost it, he has become blind to its opening.

Sabbath-breaking in its cruder forms, such as drinking, dancing and card-playing in the village inn, is reproved. Doing necessary and useful work on Sundays, especially after church-hours is not censored. The wild huntsman is punished because he hunts on a Sunday and precisely during the hours of the morning mass, the Man in the Moon either because he worked or, according to some variants, even committed theft at that time. The reason for this tolerant attitude must be sought in the important fact that the puritanical Sunday itself is of very recent date and was unknown in Europe as late as the Protestant Reformation. Calvin himself, the founder and spiritual father of most of the so-called evangelical sects, was found by a visitor amusing himself with a game of ninepins on a Sunday.

Strange as it may seem, there are few, if any, local legends driving home the necessity of observing 'tabooed' days, such as the famous superstitions about Friday and the thirteenth of the month, a fact pointing, I believe, in the direction of a learned origin for these beliefs. But even the superstitions connected with the first person or animal encountered have left but a weak echo in local legends. On the other hand, the prohibitions to work in the early morning hours, or after the close of the day, or during noon, is met with quite frequently in such stories. The imprudent farmer who disregards them is always said to have had a very unpleasant experience by encountering some uncanny being. The hours in question evidently belong to the higher powers,

μαϰάρων τοι νύϰτες ἔασιν,

says Hesiod; 'at night the Rakshas go about', 'the night belongs to the Rakshas', repeats the Veda. In Russia bathing after sunset was frowned on because a certain demon was thought to be disturbed thereby when he took his own bath during the night. In Ancient Greece the hour of noon belonged to Pan, and in Mediaeval Europe the Midday-Demon was about, no less dangerous to encounter in the solitude of glen or forest land.

Charity is recommended and the uncharitable are punished with the loss of their property. A very curious survival is the assumption, quite frequently met with in local legends, yet common to all primitive societies, that a breach of the moral law will have disastrous effects upon Nature. It is the idea behind the belief that under a good king everything will prosper in the land, whilst under a wicked one there will only be epidemics and failures of harvest. Thus the sterility of the oaks in a certain East Prussian forest is explained by the treason there committed, in 1249, by a native on a little band of German knights.[28] Treason, murder, theft of church or temple property, and sexual crimes rank foremost among the offences so reacting upon Nature, and not unnaturally, it would seem. Taken by and large, the European local legends reflect on the whole faithfully the morals of the peasantry, excelling rather in ordinary decency than in lofty principles, most of which are apt to be a dead letter in any case even among populations which boast of more knowledge and a better education.

The structure of the local legend is simple enough. There is a well-marked predilection for definite numbers and certain fixed formulas. The number three plays again the chief rôle. The redemption as a rule requires three nights of endurance; the poor soul sneezes thrice; the knock at the window or at the door is thrice repeated; the treasure is guarded by three enormous dogs, etc. Of those dogs, the eyes of the first are as big as saucers, those of the second resemble mill-wheels, and those of the third are as big as a house, etc. The technique is not markedly different from that of the fairy tale; but the scale is more modest, the sphere more limited.

Most important in local legends is the demonology. If it coincides rather closely with that of the fairy tale variants coming from the same region, there is nothing surprising in that. But it must be borne in mind that the demons passed from the local legend into the fairy tale, not the reverse. While it was then sufficient, in the treatment of the fairy tale, merely to mention that demonology in passing, more attention must be given to it in connexion with the local legend.

Of the giants it was pointed out above that they are as a rule the result of certain definite inferences, as the builders of certain edifices which loom large in the mind of the present inhabitants of the country. Or from the finds of pre-historic fossils of huge dimensions it was concluded that they must have been the bones of the giants who formerly inhabited the country.[29] This does not exclude the fact that more than once giants were called after a foreign people, usually neighbours or former inhabitants of the country more feared than liked. Thus, for example, the German word *Hüne*, denoting a giant, is unquestionably a derivation from *Hun*, which word designated not only the subjects of Attila but also the mediaeval Hungarians. Similarly the Old Norse *þurs*, the Anglo-Saxon *þyrs*, appears to be related to *Tursa* (*Τυϱσηνοί*), denoting the Etruscans and the related Rhaetians,[30] to which should be added the *'Αγαδύϱσοι* of Herodotus.[31] Needless to say, such a nomenclature by no means proves that the very conception of giants owes its existence to the exaggerated notions people had of the former inhabitants of a country and that, had there been no aborigines, there would be no giants in a given mythology.

Vastly more complicated is the problem of the Teutonic dwarfs[32] and the Celtic elves and fairies. Three theories have been advanced to explain their existence. According to one, they are the dead; according to another, they are elementary spirits; and according to the third they are due to reminiscences of former inhabitants, crowded out by the newcomers and compelled to retire into the mountains or near the sea-shore. Let us say at once that a good many story types are in accord with the first theory, in fact, probably a majority, that certain features are better explained by the second, and that there is no solid basis of fact behind the third. These statements will require some comment. In a good many dwarf stories we are definitely told that the dwarf was a child which had been murdered in some mysterious manner in years past. Sometimes the story or the story cycle ends with the statement that the skeleton in question was discovered when the house or castle was pulled down or renovated. The Teutonic dwarfs as well as the Celtic fairies are usually described as old men, with long grey or white beards, which is all the more surprising because their stature does not as a rule exceed that of a child. They are almost universally believed to have their dwellings under ground—like the dead—and they are fond of snatching the living down to their dark abode, in this resembling all chthonic powers. They are credited with superhuman wisdom, as are ancestors generally. They are attached to definite localities, often even to definite houses and definite families, with which they are supposed to be mysteriously connected and in which they take an interest, facts best explained by the assumption that they were themselves inmates of the houses in question and belonged to those very families, which simply means that they are dead ancestors. More, like those very ancestors they are the objects of a regular cult ; for they expect to receive food, and if it is refused to them they demand it and take their revenge. The Irish refer to them as the 'good people', which strikes one as a literal translation of the Latin *manes*, designating, of course, the dead ancestors of the family. For Scotland we have the express testimony of the seventeenth-century Presbyterian minister, the Rev. Mr. Kirk, who expresses himself on the subject as follows :[33]

> There be many places, called fairy-hills, which the mountain people think impious and dangerous to peel or discover, by taking earth or wood from them ; superstitiously believing the souls of their predecessors to dwell there. And for that end (say they) a mote or mount was dedicated beside every churchyard, to receive the souls till their adjacent bodies arise, and so become as a fairy hill . . .

Lastly, there exists a widespread cycle of folk-tales relating how a ferry-man is asked to ferry dwarfs across a certain stream, whilst in the oldest text of the type, in Procopius,[34] it is a question of ferrying the souls of the dead. If we are told further that the dwarfs object to caraway seed and the ringing of bells, one might point out that caraway was one of the many new-fangled things brought to Germany by the Romans and hence naturally obnoxious to the ancestors, whilst the church bells, betokening the coming of a new religion, must have been felt to be unpleasant to heathen ancestors' ghosts for much the same reason.

It would however be methodologically wrong were one to draw a hard and fast line between ancestor cult and the worship of elementary spirits. Such classificatory systems, though justified in modern scientific research, never existed in the minds of primitive populations. Nor do they exist there to-day. The chthonic powers, i.e. the dead, are in fact instrumental in the production of grain and fruit. We know how in ancient Greece the dead were propitiated for precisely this reason. A man murdered and unavenged has his fling back at the community by causing failure of harvest, as we are told most unambiguously in Sophocles' play. The souls of the dead may go into trees, becoming indistinguishable from genuine vegetation spirits. They naturally assume green, the colour of the fruit-bearing earth, which for that very reason becomes also the colour of death and of the nether powers.

The theory which attempts to identify dwarfs, elves and fairies with pre-historic populations rests on extremely slender foundations. Quite apart from the fact that the stature of dwarfs and fairies would allow us to infer that those populations were pygmies, for which assumption we lack even the slightest basis—the pre-historic populations of Europe do not appear to have differed markedly in stature from Celts and Teutons—no importance can be attached to the supernatural powers attributed to dwarfs, elves and fairies and to the Irish stories about the *Tuatha Dé Danann*. It is true that the old in-dwellers of the land are credited with powers of witchcraft by the new-comers, for the simple reason that each land is supposed to have its own protecting divinities, and the aborigines may be logically supposed to be better acquainted with these than the newcomers. Hence it is that the Scandinavians believed the Fins masters in witchcraft, whilst the Fins hold the same opinion of the Laps. But 'supernatural powers' is far too vague a term; the dead ancestors possess them no less, as we have just seen, and the German and Irish stories know nothing, as the Scandinavian ones do in regard to the Fins, about mortals visiting dwarfs, elves and fairies for the purpose of learning witchcraft.

What the euhemerized Irish chronicles have to relate about the divine *Tuatha* is of no value whatever in regard to the subject under discussion. One might with equal justice contend that Snorri's narrative in the first book of his *Heimskringla* proves that Othin and the Aesir were pre-historic dynastics or that the lost novel of Euhemeros shows that Zeus and the Olympians built the palaces of Crete.

A mixture of ancestor cult and worship of vegetation divinities is also represented by certain tale types belonging to the cycle of the Wild Hunt and the Spectres' Procession. The ghostly horsemen following the huntsman are expressly stated to be dead malefactors ; the female figures hunted, in German popular belief, are clearly vegetation spirits ; their very name, *Moosweiblein*, points in that direction. The spectres headed by Dame Holle are in general children who died in infancy and often without having received baptism. Dame Holle is an old chthonic divinity, the Teutonic parallel of the Greek Persephone and the Roman Bona Dea and at the same time a divinity of the fertility of the soil. Wherever her procession passes the fields will produce twice their usual harvest.[35]

An offshoot of the ancestor cult is further the figure of the Irish banshee and the German ' White Lady ', haunting, as we have seen, princely families. At the bottom of the belief is simply the idea that dead ancestors continue to take a more or less active interest in the fate of the family, warning their descendants of impending death or disaster. Nor is the friendly warner necessarily of the female sex, though the generally passive rôle imposed upon this figure no doubt favoured such a conception, especially in periods when men gloried in an active life.

Ancestors, in a certain measure, are also ancient divinities who, after the adoption of a new faith, had to leave their temples and take refuge underground, in hollows of mountains or at the bottom of the sea. The Irish *Tuatha* and the Teutonic Wodan, now leader of the Wild Hunt, are cases in point. Dame Holle, formerly a great vegetation goddess, has sunk to the modest rôle of a popular figure in local legends. There is good reason to believe that the well-known and widespread figure of the monarch sleeping in the interior of a mountain, various Irish kings in the Emerald Isle, King Arthur in Wales, Frederick Barbarossa in Germany, is simply a sort of humanized Kronos, the more so because the ancients themselves were not strangers to similar fancies and knew of a Kronos exiled on a lonely island in the Atlantic. Whether or not learned currents helped to shape the West and Central European stories cannot always be easily determined. Personally I believe it likely enough. Certain recurrent types, for example the tale of the farmer who was induced to enter the mountain and to sell his provisions to its unearthly inhabitants, a story found in Ireland, in Wales, in Germany, and in Bohemia, make a migration virtually certain ; but the whole cycle of tales needs monographic treatment.

Giants, dwarfs, elves, and fairies are found over a wide territory extending from the Atlantic sea-board to the Vistula River, from the North Cape to the Alps, and though the details of their distribution are still somewhat obscure, one can yet speak of their ubiquity in Europe. Much the same state of things obtains for the figures of the will-o'-the-wisp and the bogle or firedrake suspected of carrying provisions or treasure to the parties he serves, at the expense, of course, of their less lucky neighbours. The superstition in question is, moreover, quite early attested, there being a clear allusion to the firedrake in the famous Finsburg Fragment. Yet there exist, besides, spirits of a more closely circumscribed territory, and a few of these would deserve some discussion.

There is, first, the cycle of the ' Wild Women ', found in the Eastern Alps, from the Eastern cantons of Switzerland to the Eastern frontier of Austria and somewhat beyond, but also in the Pyrenees.[36] They are usually described as savage women with dishevelled hair living in the solitude of the Alpine woods, doing no particular harm to mortals unless offended, and sometimes fabled to own a sort of paradise on the mountain tops. Their origin is most obscure ; however, the available evidence tends to show that they are neither Latin (though the Latin word *selvatsch* < *silvaticum* is used to designate them in the Rhaeto-Roman districts), nor Teutonic, nor even Slavonic. They appear rather to have been inherited from the old Rhaetian and Basque population partly Latinized before the coming of the Teutons and the Slavs. One remarkable feature of theirs, the long, hanging breasts, may possibly be a reminiscence of an older population, especially if it is borne in mind that mountainous regions will often serve as a last refuge for just such peoples : but I should be diffident about advancing this explanation as more than a possibility.

A mountain spirit of purely local significance is the Silesian Rübezahl,[37] no doubt the spirit of the Silesian mountains or, better, of just one of these mountains. The name has defied all etymologists who have ventured to approach it. Probably it is not Teutonic at all. How he came into being is plausibly shown by the parallel development of the Olympian Zeus who in his origins was just such a mountain spirit with a pre-Aryan name.

The conception of the nightmare as a female spirit that can be captured and may on occasion act the rôle of the fairy wife, is peculiar to the Baltic coast of Germany, more especially to Pomerania. The conception is unquestionably Slavonic, the nightmare being obviously a Slavonic *vila* with a German name.

The Rhenish Loreley, familiar to most English readers, is in the main a creation of the Romantic Movement and thus of very recent origin.[38]

Of almost as great importance in folk-belief as the spirits of the land are the water spirits or, in Teutonic terminology, water-sprites. The reason is fairly obvious ; a glance at the map of Northern and Central Europe with its rivers and lakes will suffice. Water divinities are found in any religion grown out of such soil, and we know that Greek and Roman mythology is full of such figures or demons. Nor did Celts, Iberians, and Fins lag behind, and the number of inscriptions indicating river worship both in Gaul and Spain is truly startling. The river spirit is usually theriomorphic, appearing in the shape of a horse or a bull. He will inveigle mortals to bestride him or to attach him to their plough and cart and will then rush with them into the depth of the river or lake. Or he will beget demonic children on mortal women whom he surprises near the bank or, if a maritime spirit, on the sea-shore. Celtic and Teutonic legend is full of such tales. The story of the ancestor of the Frankish Merovingians is a case in point ; but the Celtic lay of Tydorel has essentially the same origin.[39] Stories to that effect are still current in Southern and Western Ireland.

The belief that every body of water requires a human sacrifice from time to time is widespread. Connected with it is the conviction that nothing can save a person that has been selected by the river spirit, and a number of local legends relate how a wanderer heard a voice from the water exclaiming : The hour has come and the man has not. Then he beholds a man who comes running, anxious to throw himself into the water. He stops him, much against the victim's will, and persuades him to have a drink with him at the nearest inn. When his lips touch the beer the man falls down dead ; thus the element has claimed him after all.

The sprite (nix) will abduct mortal women and compel them to live with him underneath the water. They bear him children and are thus bound to him, being unable to leave their family and to return to the living. Legends of this type have even given rise to a ballad cycle of considerable popularity.[40]

Other local legends know of female sprites (nixes), girls who will join the villagers at a dance but have to return to the water at midnight. When a trick is played upon them and the clock set back an hour they have to pay for it with their lives.

The nix, too, will appear on such festive occasions, to seduce the village fair ones and to entice them into his moist abode whence there is no return. Thus it may even occur that waterman and nixe meet and dance with one another; but naturally enough, nothing very exciting is apt to happen in consequence. As the poet expresses it:

> Die Geigen verstummen, der Tanz ist aus,
> Es trennen sich höflich die beiden.
> Sie kennen sich leider viel zu gut,
> Suchen sich jetzt zu vermeiden.

In other words, it is very much like the fortuitous meeting (quite common nowadays), at a masquerade ball, of an American with one of his *ci-devant* wives!

Often original dwarf or fairy stories are transferred to tales of water-sprites, as for example the type of the midwife who is called to the assistance of a fairy woman.[41]

In Scandinavia and the Baltic provinces, particularly in Novgorod, water-sprites are credited with the high musical ability which in Ireland and Gaelic Scotland is generally attributed to the fairies. They can teach mortals by a simple trick to become great musicians, and they possess the instrument or tune that will make all things hop and dance. This conception was probably handed down to the Teutons by the Finnish aborigines. At all events, the old sagas are silent, and continental and English stories of this type are few in number.

The Slavonic *vile* resemble on the whole the Teutonic elves, the Celtic fairies and the Modern Greek Nereides. They are more feared than liked, and Slavonic legends narrate how mortals who by mishap got into their company, were 'struck' by them and lost their reason. The phenomenon at the base is probably the sunstroke.

The chief part, in Slavonic stories, is doubtless played by the vampire or *vrykolak*, as he is called. The vampire is a 'living corpse' supposed to be animated by that peculiar hatred for the living which in savage belief characterizes the dead. Whether this belief was formerly as widespread in Western and Central Europe as certain scholars would have us think, is after all rather doubtful. We find there, in the Middle Ages, an isolated story of King John who after his death is said to have ravaged the country in the shape of a wolf; but the tale may be simply an invention of one of the dead king's numerous enemies. It is only in Iceland that vampire stories abound, and we have to confess that with our present knowledge we are hard put to it to account for this curious fact. In all probability we are dealing with a recrudescence of a belief long overcome in the homeland but revived in the colony, a recrudescence for which more recent American history furnishes more than one parallel. For the notion that colonies will always progress more rapidly than the mother-country, though perhaps true in the more material aspects of human life, admits of numerous exceptions and, like most general truths, is at bottom but a half-truth. At all events, the mediaeval chronicles know but little about vampires, and where in Central Europe this figure occurs in local legends we have to reckon with a Slavonic substratum or with currents emanating from the Slavonic countries of Europe.

The problem is even more complicated for Modern Greece, where it is linked up with the vexed question of the Slavonic influence and the Slavonic colonization in Byzantine times. Suffice it to say that two eminent folklorists, well familiar with religious belief both in Classical and Modern Greece, are of opinion that the essential features of the vampire superstition existed in Ancient Greece and were merely reinforced and slightly modified by the corresponding beliefs of the Slavonic immigrants.[42]

Rather closely related to the vampire is the figure of the werewolf [43]—the Slavonic word *vrykolak* meant originally ' werewolf ', not ' vampire '—but found all over the Old World, from Portugal to the shores of the Pacific and from the North Cape to the Interior of Africa. Where wolves are absent we have were-tigers or were-leopards. The idea originated with a peculiar form of mental disease (lycanthropy), the patient, under its attack, believing himself a wolf. But it would be methodologically incorrect to explain all werewolf stories on that basis. On the contrary, once the basic idea existed, the novelistic fancy of story-tellers took hold of it and used it to advantage. Since wolves have virtually disappeared from Western Europe werewolf stories have been visibly on the decline. Antiquity and the Middle Ages relished them, and we shall have to say more on this subject in the chapter dealing with migratory legends.

Another strange figure that deserves some discussion in this connexion is that of the ' Leader of Wolves ' (*meneur de loups*), or the Wolf-Man, as he may be called. He is described as a tall old man who on certain nights leads all the wolves of a district to pasture, and it is obviously most dangerous to offend him in any way. He occurs in tales from France to Russia and was no doubt known in England at the time when wolves were not restricted to the zoological gardens. The origin of this figure is fairly obscure ; but it would be difficult to dissociate him from the related figure of the giant-shepherd occurring in a number of mediaeval romances and himself probably of Oriental origin.[44]

Countries with Slavonic populations or Slavonic substrata also know the strange and curious figure of the *King of Rats*, i.e. a theriomorphic being with supernatural powers wielding complete control over the 'vermine', that is, rats, mice, weasels, etc., which he may send at any moment to destroy the crops of a careless offender. I am inclined to see some connexion between this king or, better, god, of rats and the Near Eastern Baal-šebub, the god of flies, though here as elsewhere much is needed by way of a thorough examination of all the available material.

From figures of this type to the Christian Devil is not a far cry, and a good deal may be said of the rôle of the Devil in local legends. One fact may be stated at the outset: the Devil is apparently vastly more popular than the Deity; he is, in fact, as popular as certain saints, with this important difference that whilst the saints lost in their struggle with the zeal of the sixteenth-century reformers, the Devil only gained by the change. Luther himself was absolutely convinced of his existence and is said to have thrown his ink-bottle at him. Devil stories are therefore as popular now as they ever were in the Middle Ages, and certain types of them, found in mediaeval *exempla*, still flourish among village folk. A few examples will no doubt prove helpful. There is the story of the Devil acting as a stenographer by taking down in writing all the idle words spoken by women while the sacrifice of the Mass is in progress. If we may believe the writer, his was a most difficult job and worse than following a parliamentary debate. There is the type of the Devil appearing as a card-player and joining a party of peasants, engaged in a game of poker while Mass is being celebrated. Or he may appear as a fiddler making the villagers dance on some fast-day, All Souls' Eve, for example. Or he may act as a dancer himself to swing about a haughty fair one and fly off with her in the end, as he danced and flew off with the excise man. In still another type he assumes the shape of a woman to tempt a man who distinguishes himself by much the same weakness as Squire Thornhill. The outcome of such tales may be happy or the reverse. Sometimes the Evil One is recognized by his crippled legs or feet, and the priest appears on the premises in time to exorcise him. Often enough, however, he flies off with at least one victim, to serve as a salutary example. The moralizing tone is evident in all these tales, and one may conjecture that the clergy not only did not discourage them but may have helped to give them as wide a circulation as possible. It is interesting to watch these stories modify themselves in Protestant countries, the minister, as is well known, lacking the powers of exorcism with which the priest is credited even by Protestants. Thus the dissolute squire mentioned above, when pursued by the Devil whom he had taken for a young woman, rushes into his cabinet, takes down a violin and begins to play a Lutheran hymn, which proves of sufficient strength to drive the Evil One away.

Of undoubtedly ecclesiastical origin are the devil stories told of Freemasons on the Continent, and not only in Roman Catholic districts. For it must be remembered that in Germany, for example, that brotherhood no more enjoys the goodwill of the Lutheran divines than that of the Catholic ones. The famous tale of how Martin Luther was carried off by the Devil is of course obviously a Roman Catholic invention ; but not to be outdone, the Lutheran clergy of Brunswick had Germany's great emancipator, the author of *Nathan the Wise*, carried off by His Satanic Majesty in the same summary fashion. *Sancta Simplicitas !*

On the other hand, another type of devil stories was certainly *not* encouraged by the clergy, as will be readily seen. In one legend of considerable popularity the Devil haunts a certain house. The priest is called to drive him off, but without success. The Devil resists all his efforts and replies by pointing out the various little shortcomings of the holy man. The latter is as a rule completely abashed and thinks it wise to beat a prudent retreat.

Very numerous are the stories relating how the Devil was cheated by a mortal with whom he had concluded a pact. When covered with an ecclesiastical varnish, this type develops into legends of the type of the Greek *Theophilus* and the German *Faust*. The village variants are more simple. Often the clever wife of the hero finds a way out, or else one of his tenants gives him some good piece of advice, or else he himself included in the pact a condition which he knew the Devil could not fulfil, such as counting all the shrines of the district. How exactly such stories originated is not clear. The mythological school saw everywhere pagan divinities and in the Devil always a successor of the Norse Loki. Such fancies have been given up, and where a connexion between a pre-Christian divinity and the Devil is claimed, the burden of proof lies with those who make this claim. It is more likely that these tales are merely debased forms of Christian legends such as those of *Theophilus* and *Faust*, transferred into a peasant environment and spiced with peasant humour.[45]

Of one type of such devil stories the origin is definitely known : I refer to the story of the Devil as master-builder. The Devil, so the tale runs, promises a prince to build a certain cathedral or a certain bridge provided he be given the first person that will enter the cathedral or cross the bridge. He is outwitted by the simple device of having an animal enter the church or cross the bridge. The basis of this curious legend is the belief that the first party to enter a new building or to cross a newly-built bridge will die within the year, the building or structure demanding a human sacrifice. The substitution of an animal for a human being clearly points in the direction of a vicarious sacrifice.

Reference has already been made to the rôle of the saints in local legends. Their part, as in the merry tales mentioned above, is apt not to be particularly dignified. Saint Peter especially often comes in for a good drubbing. There is no need to add that no irreverence is intended on the part of the villagers. The Christian saints simply represent the lower mythology so prominent in local legends. As we go east, it is not the great divinities of the Zoroastrian and Hindoo systems nor the Mohammedan Allah who are the central figures of local legends, but again the demons of the elder faith, *divs*, godlings, *jinn*, divinities of a lower order and of a purely local importance. It goes without saying that the characteristics of divinity as we understand it cannot possibly be sought in the humble creations of the popular muse ; hence there can be really no question about lack of reverence or of blasphemy. Modern religion, purged, by a long series of philosophical abstractions, of the primitive fancies which constitute what we call a ' mythology ', is in fact an entirely different world.

A very curious form of survival is represented by Dioscuric legends of the local variety, a class found in several regions of the European continent, but more especially in the territory inhabited by Alemannic and Swabian people, that is, German Switzerland, Alsace, the former grand-duchy of Baden, and the former kingdom of Württemberg. The most common form is the type of the hostile twin-brothers, sometimes fighting for the possession of a woman and often dying simultaneously, pierced by one another's arrows. Or, like the Dioscures of old, two knights clad in white will appear, to give warning of an approaching danger. There can be little doubt about the essential fact that legends such as these hark back to ancient superstitions connected with twin-births, superstitions which we know to have lingered down into the Middle Ages.[46]

On the other hand, we find an even more widespread type, which is manifestly of Christian origin, belonging to the important type of mediaeval visions. The tenant of a harsh and cruel squire who has just died had paid his rent without being able to show the receipt. The even more wicked wife demands the payment a second time, and in his need the poor man has recourse to a wizard who conjures up the squire's ghost, all wrapped up in flames, and forces him to deliver the receipt to the peasant. This the latter duly hands over to the lady, along with a message from the husband, none too complimentary to her. It is useless to point out that a story of this character could only arise in feudal and Christian Europe. The clerical element in particular is still clearly visible in most specimens, and there is a straight line leading from the mediaeval clerk oppressed in Hell by a heavy cloak spun from his own sophisms (as heavy, we may presume, as the leaden cloaks of Dante's hypocrites) to Marley's ghost dragging an enormous chain 'of cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds, and heavy purses wrought in steel'.

The variety of the elements making up the local legends as we know them will thus be clear. What is wanted is a careful monographic treatment of each type, for the results reached in this way will be more helpful and illuminating than a thousand generalizations. This much is certain, however: Of all types of popular fiction passed in review thus far the local legend bears out best the claims of the Anthropological School and would furnish its disciples with more survivals than either fairy or merry tale. Oddly enough, that School has quite neglected the local legend, no doubt because of its humble form. Most of those survivals we have already encountered: human sacrifice made to rivers and lakes, the foundation sacrifice, the vampire or living corpse, the spectres' procession and the Wild Hunt, presupposing as they do a fairly primitive form of animism. More important still, we encounter there a demonology quite on a par with any of pre-Homeric times, certainly one which any organized philosophically grounded religion would be ashamed to own. That does not mean, of course, that every individual local legend has such a venerable past; most of them probably have not. Yet the psychological basis of all of them, whether old or new, is extremely rudimentary; and the *genre*, then, may justly claim an antiquity which fairy tales and merry tales are very far from possessing.

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[12] *Les Légendes épiques*, III², 39 sqq.

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[16] Cf. my study in *M.S.G.V.*, XXIX, 96–100.

[17] Cf. *Le Moyen Age*, XXXVIII, 190–207.

[18] *Balor with the Evil Eye*, p. 119.

[19] A. Taylor, *Northern Parallels to the Death of Pan*, St. Louis, 1922.

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[38] Cf. W. Hertz, *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, Stuttgart, 1905, pp. 456 sqq.

[39] *Etudes*, pp. 119 sqq.; *M.L.R.*, XXIV, 200–4.

[40] Cf. K. Spiess, *Die deutschen Balladen von Wassermanns Braut und Wassermanns Frau*, *A.S.N.S.L.*, CXLIII, 1–16.

[41] E. S. Hartland, *The Science of Fairy Tales*, London, 1891, pp. 37 sqq.

[42] W. Fischer, *Dämonische Wesen, Vampir und Werwolf in Geschichte und Sage*, Stuttgart, 1906; Wehrhan, *Die Sage*, p. 62; Naumann, *Primitive Gemeinschaftskultur*, Jena, 1921, pp. 20 sqq.; Tawney Penzer, VI, 136 sq.; C. N. Gould, *S.S.N.*, IX, 167–201; G. F. Abbott, *Macedonian Folklore*, Cambridge, 1903, p. 217; J. C. Lawson, *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion*, Cambridge, 1910, p. 71; 183; 361 sqq.; Dudley Wright, *Vampires and Vampirism*, London, 1924; E. Maass, *Neue Jahrbücher*, 1922, XLIX, 205 sqq.

[43] W. Hertz, *Der Werwolf*, Stuttgart, 1862.

[44] Cf. C. A. Williams, *Oriental Affinities of the Legend of the Hairy Anchorite* (*University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature*, X, 2; XI, 4), Urbana, Illinois, 1925–6; *N.T.T.*, 1928, pp. 282–4.

[45] A. Wünsche, *Der Sagenkreis vom geprellten Teufel*, Wien, 1905; Aarne-Thompson, pp. 158 sqq.

[46] *Etudes*, pp. 154 sqq.

CHAPTER V

THE MIGRATORY LEGEND

THE term 'migratory legend' is a translation of the German *Wandersage.* By it we mean a narrative of a certain length, usually shorter than a fairy tale, in prose, existing in a limited number of variants, some, if not all, of which may become localized in quite different places. The number of motives is, generally speaking, large enough and their order sufficiently stable to preclude the theory of polygenesis. But the number of known variants does not as a rule suffice to allow of an analysis and a comparative study according to the principles of the geographic-historical method. That means that we must suppose such a legend to have originated in a definite place and at a definite time, though we are usually unable to determine either. Nor does a migratory legend presuppose a definite basis in popular belief or practice. On the contrary, the same legend may be grafted on quite different beliefs or practices. The local legend, as we saw, is stationary, though the motives composing it may and do migrate at least over a limited territory. The migratory legend may migrate over wide expanses of land.

One of the best examples of a migratory legend, one of the few, it may be added, of which we definitely know the origin and history, is the tale of the *Victim's Last Words.* A child about to be walled in as a foundation sacrifice (in Europe) makes some remark which moves the bystanders to tears. In the Near East the child is to be killed because the king wishes to be cured from a disease (usually leprosy) by bathing in its blood. The child is delivered up by its parents who have been bribed by a large sum of money, and when facing death is seen to laugh. When asked for the reason of this mysterious laugh, it observes that ordinarily children seek refuge with their parents and, if orphans, with the king, but in his case parents and monarch are allied to take his life. Still farther east, in India, the child is to be sacrificed to a demon, and his parents and the king hold it, while the priest prepares the sacrifice. There follows again the mysterious laugh and the explanation given: Parents, king and priest act contrary to the rule prescribing how they should act, and only in order to save their present miserable and wretched lives, having no regard for their re-births to come, which will depend upon their conduct in this life. In other words, the tale is one of those invented to exemplify the fundamental doctrine of Buddhism. From India it migrated, first to the countries of the Near East, being slightly modified in the process, and from the Near East it reached Europe, where it was grafted on the stem of the old foundation sacrifice, and at the same time lost its original point, having sunk to the low intellectual level of the mediaeval peasantry.[1]

No less instructive is the history of the so-called *Secundus Biography*. It is the story of the philosopher who tempts his own mother in order to test the truth of the maxim that there is nothing good in women. As is to be foreseen, she succumbs to the temptation; he makes himself known to her, and she dies from the shock. This tale occurs in the Indian *Jatakam*, where the action is distributed over two personages, teacher and pupil. At the behest of the former the pupil makes love to the teacher's old mother and induces her to slay her son. When she is told about the trick played upon her she dies on the spot; but the pupil is now convinced of the utter worthlessness of women, and like the Western Secundus he takes upon himself a terrible vow. There can be no doubt whatever that this Indian story migrated west, its action being simplified and fused with the Jewish tale of the *Emperor and the Philosopher*. When the two leading male characters were reduced to one, the incest motive took the place of the attempted murder.[2]

Lest I be accused of undue partisanship for Benfey's Indianist theory, I shall adduce a migratory legend about the *Near* Eastern origin of which there can be little doubt. I refer to the tale of the wise Aḥikar, according to all available evidence of Semitic provenance. Aḥikar, it will be recalled, loses the king's favour thanks to the slander of an ungrateful nephew, Nadan. He escapes with his life, being concealed in the house of a grateful friend. The monarch receives an ultimatum from another king who, having heard of Aḥikar's presumed death, demands a number of impossible things. Aḥikar is produced, leads the other king *ad absurdum* and is reinstated in the royal favour, his nephew receiving the punishment he so justly deserves. Now very much the same story occurs in mediaeval India, where however the figure of the ungrateful nephew has disappeared and the monarch bears the latter's name. The action has thus been reduced from three protagonists to only two. But this simplification itself points to the secondary and derivative character of the Indian version.[3]

Finally, the Old English Beowulf rests to all appearances upon a very ancient migratory legend which ran as follows. The hero in defending a homestead against a demon wrenched out the latter's arm, followed the trace of the blood to a body of water in which the demon had his dwelling, plunged into its depth and there slew him. The story occurs in much the same form in the mediaeval Indian *Kathâ Sarit Sâgara*, where it is connected, however, with Near Eastern material (the story of Tobit). Hence the inference is justified that the legend originated somewhere in the Near East and from there migrated both in a westerly and an easterly direction.[4]

Near Eastern, too, is a certain well-known werewolf story. The hero has been transformed into a werewolf, usually by a wicked wife whose practices of the magic arts he has imprudently watched. In wolf-shape he rescues the child of a king, which good action leads to his recovery of his human shape and to the punishment of the sorceress. The tale is widely current in Celtic Europe; but its occurrence in a Sudanese variant, where it is fused with other Near Eastern material, leaves no doubt about its Eastern origin.[5]

Eastern, too, is the famous legend of Buridan, the scholar who unmasks the wicked queen who used to slay her lovers after having had her fill of love. This strange story had its origin in the Babylonian Ishtar legend, the love of that goddess meaning death to the heroes whom she seduced. This tale appears to have spread over the Mediterranean countries, especially Italy, whence at the time of the bloom of the great Italian universities it was carried to France and Germany, no doubt by wandering scholars. For Buridan, the hero, is himself a typical scholar and an historical personage besides.[6]

The well-known legend of the Wandering Jew, the origins of which are still veiled in obscurity,[7] is also, no doubt, semi-learned. It is difficult to dissociate his figure from that of Al-Khidr, one of the Arabic prophets who is believed to wander about, enjoying everlasting life, rewarding the good and punishing the wicked. With the crusades Europeans became familiar with this legendary figure, and out of it developed the character of Ahasuerus or Isaac Laquedam. But there can be little doubt that owing to purely learned influences the Wandering Jew became an allegory of the Jewish people, persecuted and hunted down as it was, until the Great Revolution effected a change for the better. To quote the French novelist Claude Tillier[8]:

> The Wandering Jew is the image of the Jewish nation drawn by some unknown poet of the people on the wall of a peasant's hut. This myth is so striking that one must be blind not to see through it. The Wandering Jew has no roof, no hearth, no legal and political domicile: the Jewish people has no country. The Wandering Jew is obliged to roam without rest, without stopping, without taking a breath. . . . He has already gone seven times around the world. The Jewish people is nowhere settled definitely; it lives everywhere under tents; it wanders to and fro, like the waves of the ocean and floats, like the foam, on the surface of the nations. Like a piece of straw it is carried by the current of civilization and has by this time gone many times around the world. The Wandering Jew has always five cents in his pockets. The Jewish people, constantly brought to ruin by the exactions of princes, has always regained its prosperity . . . Its opulence has grown again by itself. The Wandering Jew can spend only five cents at a time. The Jewish people, obliged to conceal its riches, has become miserly and parsimonious; it spends little. The punishment of the Wandering Jew will last forever. The Jewish people can no more be reunited as a nation than the ashes of an oak struck by the lightning can again be made to constitute a tree. It will be dispersed over the surface of the globe to the end of time.

However that may be—and this allegorical character of the story has been hotly denied—we are assuredly dealing with a legend that is essentially migratory in character.

All English readers will recall the German story of the cruel bishop Hatto of Mainz who was eaten up by mice in punishment for his hardness of heart. In that form the legend is localized at the *Mäuseturm* near Bingen on the Rhine. It owes this localization to a popular etymology, *Mautturm*, i.e. customs tower, having been taken for *Mäuseturm*; but the tale itself is far older than the tower and besides is localized in at least a dozen different spots all over Western and Central Europe.[9] How it spread, we do not know; but at the basis is the ancient belief that the human soul after death assumes the shape of a mouse. The mice which eat the cruel bishop are simply the souls of the innocent people he had caused to be burned alive. Still, there can be no talk of polygenesis so far as this legend is concerned; for the motives of the burning of hungry people and their ghostly revenge upon their torturer are certainly altogether too individual and too definitely shaped to admit of several independent inventions in different places and at different times.

The same holds true, I believe, for the famous story told by Gregory of Tours about the Frankish king Guntchram. When that monarch was having a nap in the open air the soldier who watched him saw a mouse slip out of his mouth and run toward a narrow ditch. The soldier laid his sword across it, the mouse passed over and entered a tumulus on the other side. After a while it came out again, crossed the sword bridge and slipped back into the king's mouth, who thereupon woke up and told the soldier a dream he had had. He had dreamt that he was going over a steel bridge and into a treasure house. When the tumulus was opened, a considerable treasure was found inside. This story occurs in a large number of variants both in Europe and India.[10] Dr. Hans Naumann in a recent study inclines toward an explanation by the theory of polygenesis. It must of course be admitted that the fundamental belief at the bottom of the story—the mouse-shaped soul—is fairly ubiquitous. Yet the details, in particular the finding of the treasure, are in my view far too distinct to allow of such an explanation. The tale originated in one place and from there rapidly spread in all directions, the more easily because its fundamental idea would be understood everywhere, at least wherever man had reached the animistic stage of religious development.

Sometimes the casual mention of a name that will obstinately stick to the story throughout all its vicissitudes will furnish a valuable clue. Thus the story of the *Dream of the Treasure on the Bridge* does seem to have been first told in England and about London Bridge, though I am far from sharing the other speculations of Sir Lawrence Gomme in this connexion. Anyhow, the narrative is an excellent example of a migratory legend, since it is found in most European countries.[11]

In a few cases certain variants of a legend will be explained by historical migration, whilst others must have arisen by polygenesis. The best example is furnished by the legend of the *Sparrows of Cirencester*. The idea of setting a besieged town on fire by attaching burning materials to the birds that have their nests on its houses is in this form simply one of the numerous stratagems attributed to the Normans when all Europe was frightened, not to say terrorized, by their piratical expeditions. It has two roots, viz., the ancient belief in fire-carrying birds, recorded by Pliny and simply an off-shoot of the belief in the bird who carried the heavenly fire down to man, and a ritual known from the story of Samson and the foxes, and the foxes of Carseoli mentioned in Ovid's *Fasti*. If the story of the stratagem is told of Norman chiefs, as it is in Saxo's *Gesta Danorum* and some other mediaeval compilations, or current in countries which, as England, have been for years under Norman influence, some historical connexion will best account for the migration. No doubt, the Normans who must have felt highly flattered by the praise of their own ingenuity, rather encouraged than stemmed it. However, when the same or a similar story occurs in Bohemia, in Hungary, and in West Africa, the theory of polygenesis will account for those variants, the more so because we definitely know the ritual at the base of the story of Samson, who utilized not birds but foxes to the detriment of his enemies the Philistines.[12]

Often a legend, though localized in a definite country, still betrays its foreign origin by its essentially isolated character. All English readers will remember the tale of the German poet Tannhäuser, an historical personage of the thirteenth century, his adventures in the mountain of Venus and at the papal court,[13] his confession before the Holy Father, not altogether discreet if we are to believe the poet:

> Frau Venus ist eine schöne Frau,
> Liebreizend und anmutreiche;
> Wie Sonnenschein und Blumenduft
> Ist ihre Stimme, die weiche.
>
> . . . .
>
> Wenn ich den ganzen Himmel besäss,
> Frau Venus schenkt ich ihn gerne;
> Ich gäb' ihr die Sonne, ich gäb' ihr den Mond,
> Ich gäbe ihr sämtliche Sterne,

and its purely negative result:

> Der Teufel, den man Venus nennt,
> Er ist der Schlimmste von allen:
> Erretten kann ich dich nimmermehr
> Aus seinen schönen Krallen.

The legend is utterly un-German and non-popular. It is un-German because Teutonic mythology knows nothing about a figure corresponding to the classical Aphrodite—the goddess Freya is known in Sweden only—and nothing of a sort of terrestrial paradise in the interior of a mountain, though an Icelandic tale tells of a mountain as the dwelling place of souls after death. It is non-popular because Tannhäuser never seems to have been known outside court circles, because he is connected with the historical pope Urban IV, who was really his contemporary, and because there is no parallel legend to be found anywhere in Teutonic countries, though there are plenty of *Venusberge* in Germany. Were the legend genuinely Teutonic, Tannhäuser would have entered a place more resembling the Norse Valhǫl of Viking times; were it popular, it would not be Tannhäuser who had the adventure, but some more popular character, certainly no man of letters. Very much the same story is related by the Frenchman Antoine de la Salle, who localizes it in Italy, though the hero is again a German knight Now it must be recalled that essentially the same tale is told of the Scottish poet Thomas of Erceldoune, called the Rhymer, where Venus and her maidens are however genuine elves or fairies of the Celtic variety. In fact, that wonderful kingdom of Venus, whether in Germany or in Italy, has no parallel whatever either in ancient Greek and Roman religion or in the Teutonic Middle Ages, but it resembles to a point the Irish *Tir-na-nogue*, the Land of Youth, where the heroes pass their time in everlasting bliss, ignoring the maxim

Zwischen Sinnenglück und Seelenfrieden
Bleibt dem Menschen nur die bange Wahl.

As for Venus herself, she is of course neither the Greek Aphrodite, gently ridiculed by Homer, nor the mother of Aeneas, essentially a very serious person, nor even the Oriental Astarte with her crude rites. She is purely and simply that glorious goddess celebrated by Lucretius in one of the most wonderful hymns of all times, the counterpart of the Greek Physis, the personification of life-giving Nature. There can then be little doubt that the German Tannhäuser Legend is essentially Celtic, that it migrated from Celtic England to Germany, the figure of the poet Thomas, unknown on the continent, being taken by that of Tannhäuser. The Irish fairies being likewise unknown in Germany, they were replaced by Venus and her ladies, the *tertium comparationis* being, of course, their marvellous beauty and their amatory qualities. Who can legitimately be supposed guilty of the transplantation ? The answer is obvious : the names alone furnish it. They were the scholars, of course, the *Vagantes*, the creators of the mediaeval Latin love lyric, the very ones who traversed Europe from one end to the other and who would naturally choose one of their own order, a man of letters, that is, to be the hero of their tale. So after all, the English, when they enjoy Wagner's opera, may console themselves with the thought that they are getting back what in part at least was once their own.

Almost the same is true of the equally famous tale of the *Knight of the Swan*,[14] though in this case the transmitters were not so much the scholars as the clerics. The lovely myth is in its present form essentially a creation of the country between the Meuse and the Rhine. In fact, it no doubt owes its diffusion and popularity to the armorial ambitions of two Dutch noble families, the counts of Boulogne and the counts of Bouillon. When the latter became celebrated all over Europe as a consequence of the First Crusade the legend of the house reached wider circles and thus attracted the attention of poets and story-tellers. That legend is in its essential features a queer combination of the highly melodramatic and sentimental fairy tale of the *Innocent and Persecuted Queen*, and the migratory legend of the *Demon Wife*, of which more anon. On these tales was then grafted the lovely Irish legend of the *Children of Lir*, transformed into swans by their wicked stepmother. How did it reach the Low Countries? The answer is not difficult to find. The tenth century is marked by the Danish invasions of Ireland, leading to the wholesale destruction of Irish monasteries and the massacre of Irish monks and secular priests. This catastrophe caused an emigration on a large scale of Irish clerics, who took refuge in the convents of the Continent, in France, the Low Countries, and Germany. It was they, no doubt, who spread on the Continent the Irish tale of the children converted into swans and condemned to live in that form for centuries until redeemed by a Christian bell and a Christian priest.

A whole cluster of migratory and local legends in strange combination make up the cycle of the *King in the Mountain.*[15] As is well known, in Celtic, Teutonic and Slavonic countries we find, usually quite well localized, the tale of a king shut up in the interior of a mountain, whence he will one day break forth to restore his country to its pristine splendour. In Germany, where the tale was originally connected with the name of Frederick II, it is usually derived from ancient Teutonic notions about the world of the dead being located in the interior of a mountain, a belief of which we find traces even in far-off Iceland. Such a basis is, however, far from sufficient to explain the legendary cycle in question, and for the following reasons. In Germany Frederick II was indeed the first monarch thus to be connected with this group of legends. Yet this monarch was not only not very popular in Germany; he was regarded there with more or less indifference, for the very valid reason that most of his energies were devoted to his Italian possessions, where also he fought his battles, and hardly, if at all, to Germany. Consequently, after his death he left but few regrets north of the Alps but all the more in Italy, where moreover his partisans soon fared ill, losing all their power after 1266 and for the most part living in exile. His 'second coming', then, would have been a godsend to the Italian Ghibellines, but not at all to the German partisans of the Hohenstaufen, persecuted by no one.

To this simple consideration must be added a fact of a purely chronological nature. Long before we hear of the legend of the King in the Mountain north of the Alps, the Italians knew of King Arthur living in the interior of Mt. Aetna. Now King Arthur's second coming was indeed eagerly expected by the Celtic world of Wales, Cornwall and Brittany, so much so that Henry II, to lay such rumours and hopes, felt it useful to have the genuine tomb of the old British king ' discovered '. To this day King Arthur is still supposed to slumber in more than one of the mountains of Wales. If it is asked how he got into Mt. Aetna, the answer is simple. It was the Normans who had carried his legend thither, with most of the rest of the Arthurian Romance Cycle.[16] What happened then was, shortly, this. The Ghibellines of Sicily, Frederick II's kingdom to which he devoted all his care, transferred to their dead leader the story told before him of Arthur, who to them was but a monarch of fairy-land. The Italian Ghibellines then transmitted the story in this new form to the German partisans of the Hohenstaufen, many of whom served moreover in the army of Manfred, Frederick's son, and fought in the battle of Benevento, in 1266.

The notion of a great monarch of old returning to bring back to his people the golden age might possibly be considered as so deep-rooted in human psychology that a spontaneous origin in different places and at different periods might be postulated. What favours such a view is the curious tradition hailing from Mexico, according to which the natives saw in the butcher Cortez and his brigands such a god-king returning from over the seas. If they did, no people was ever doomed to a greater disappointment. However that may be, in Europe at least this belief is linked up with so many curious details, such as the dead tree sprouting afresh, the last battle, etc., that all ideas of an independent origin must at once be discarded. On the contrary, we have here the old Jewish messianic legend in a new form, and the Oriental origin of these beliefs cannot possibly be called into question. These messianic ideas, which originated in far-off Babylon many centuries previously and migrated to the Occident toward the end of the Roman civil wars, must therefore be presumed to have furnished the basis of this curious cluster of legends, justly famous all over Europe, from Ireland to Bohemia and from Southern Italy to Denmark.

What facilitated its spread was naturally the human, all too human, fancy to seek the golden age in the past and to associate it with the name of some ruler, usually the last of a reigning family, who was thus identified with the national grandeur. That this ruler, more often than not, was simply a vainglorious numskull, like Charles the Bold of Burgundy, or an odious tyrant, like Napoleon I, merely attests to universal human stupidity, whilst 'the wiser sort', as the Scottish historian Major puts it, 'who knew the groundlessness of this belief, were yet unwilling to go contrary to it, lest the ignorant in their indignation should destroy them'.[17] No doubt he remembered the words of Alanus ab Insulis on the Welsh, who were ready to lynch anyone who should dare deny the immortality of Arthur and his coming back to free the British Celts from the Saxon yoke.

I do not wish to leave the important subject of the mediaeval Irish influences on the folk-lore of the Continent without drawing attention to another interesting point which requires monographic treatment.

In Western Germany, particularly in the Rhine country, there exist rock formations variously called *Brunehild's Bed* or *Brunehild's Chair.* German scholars have generally and without further ado seen in these names clear allusions to the Nibelungen Cycle. The matter is, however, a little more complicated. For in the first place there existed an historical queen Brunechildis ruling precisely over that part of the Frankish realm to which the Rhine and all of Southern and Western Germany at least nominally belonged. That queen, who was one of those characters that mark for centuries the history of their country with the impress of their personality, may well be as much responsible for the names in question as the legendary wife of the Burgundian king Gunther. What is even more curious is that in Ireland we find identical rock formations which there bear the name of *Bed of Dermat and Grania* and which are moreover the scene of certain fertility rites. Now if one remembers that the Rhine country was the very centre of the activity of Irish missionaries in Merovingian times and that with one of them in particular, Saint Columbanus, the Frankish queen Brunechildis was not on the friendliest terms, one cannot help suspecting some connexion between the facts just pointed out. However, no definite judgment can be pronounced on the subject until further inquiry with a careful utilization of all the material bearing on the question.

Our mention of the Frankish Brunechildis, who was certainly a *valandinne* (as the Middle High German poet accuses Krimhild of being) and who, in the mind of Saint Columbanus at least, was identified with the Devil, brings us back to the story of the *Demon Wife*, that is, the tale of the mortal contracting a union with a superhuman wife. This motive may occur in three different forms. The wife may consent to be married to him on condition that he observes a certain taboo. When he breaks it, she promptly leaves him. This motive is the central incident of a well-known and widespread fairy tale the Indian origin of which was proved recently by the geographic-historical method.[18] In the second form the breaking of the taboo has for consequence not only the departure of the wife but the death (or blinding) of the husband. In this form the story occurs in Sicily in ancient times, the lover of a goddess being blinded when he commits an act of unfaithfulness, that is, falls in love with a mortal. The best known mediaeval variant is the tale of Peter of Staufenberg and his invisible fairy wife. When against her warning he marries a mortal woman, she appears to him one last time warning him of his impending death. This form appears to be essentially Mediteranean, being merely a derivative of the ancient motive that intercourse with a goddess means death or blindness for the mortal, as shown by the stories of Iasion and Demeter and of Anchises and Venus.

One of the most delightful versions was told by Charon of Lampsakos and has been preserved, luckily, by a scholiast.[19]

> The Cnidian Rhoikos saves the nymph of an oak-tree by supporting her tree. In reward she grants him her love on condition that he would avoid henceforth all intercourse with other women. A bee is the messenger and go-between. One day, as Rhoikos was sitting at a game of draughts, the bee came flying ; but the boor, preferring his game to an hour of tryst with his fair one, gave her a rude welcome. The bee duly reported the insult, and the nymph, justly indignant, paralysed him in punishment.

This version bears all the earmarks of a late modification. The express condition that he is to remain loyal to the nymph appears as a blind motive, whilst the anger of the fairy-mistress is provoked by quite another matter, the hero's boorishness, which moreover ill accords with his kindliness and charity in supporting the oak-tree. We shall therefore not be far wrong if we assume that in the lost original text he was guilty, not so much of a breach of etiquette and good manners, as of a breach of his plighted word.

Nor is this story type unknown in Scandinavia. In the long *Saga of Olaf Tryggvason* we are told how the hero, Helgi Thorisson, has fallen into the power of the fair Ingeborg of the Glittering Plains, clearly an otherworld creature. He is released by the prayers of King Olaf, but the jealous fairy-mistress blinds him, lest the daughters of Norway enjoy his love, i.e., according to the well-known mediaeval notion that the eyes are the chief instrument of captivation, lest he fall in love with a mortal.[20]

In the last of the three forms enumerated above, the demon wife has no other purpose than that of destroying, by vampire-like methods, the family of her husband, especially her step-children. This variant is unquestionably of Indian origin, the woman being a rakshasa who has assumed a fair shape. In India tales of this type occur in some of the oldest collections and are still current in modern folk-lore: in the Occident they are more or less isolated, though there is certainly no want of evil step-mothers. The *Swan Knight* tale is, I believe, one of the earliest European variants of this third form.

A story migration of this sort is of course not without certain consequences for the story. The very fact that it is told and retold and that there are good, bad and indifferent story-tellers very often alters the tale beyond recognition. A very good example is furnished by the French romance *La Fille du comte de Pontieu.*

> A husband and wife, going on a pilgrimage, are set upon by robbers, who tie the husband to a tree and do violence to the woman. When they are gone, the wife takes her husband's sword and wants to kill him, but inadvertently cuts his ropes, thus setting him free.

No explanation for her strange conduct is given in the romance, and modern students have advanced the strangest and most unlikely and far-fetched theories. The incident becomes clear at once if we realize that the story in question is but a Western variant of the Indian tale of the *Disloyal Wife.* The woman, in the archetype, falls in love with the robber-captain and wishes to kill her husband in good earnest, failing, however, in the attempt. The story, by the way, is a typical migratory legend; we have not only very ancient Indian variants but even the Near Eastern links which explain its history.[21]

The French romance just discussed and its cognate versions, both Western and Oriental, are but one type in a whole cycle which may fitly be called the *Cycle of the Disloyal Wife.* Gaston Paris, shortly before his death, in 1903, treated another type of this cycle in a masterly study [22] and conclusively proved its Oriental provenance. In a third type, clearly influenced by the migratory legend of the witch-goddess who transforms her lovers, the better half of an evidently very successful union by marriage transforms her partner into an animal, a dog, a wolf, a donkey, in an Icelandic variant even into a crane, either out of mere spite or because he had watched her in some act of witchery. The unfortunate husband regains his human shape, either thanks to the interference of another magician of the fair sex or by a lucky accident. He then proceeds to transform his former wife in her turn. The type is unquestionably of Oriental origin, but it reached Ireland and even Iceland in the early Middle Ages. So far it has received no adequate monographic treatment.[23]

A story for which the theory of polygenesis has been advanced but which is, to my view, a typical migratory legend, is the Andromeda tale.[24] Sir James G. Frazer attempted to derive it from the practice of human sacrifice, made, especially, to rivers, and he quotes a variant from Central Africa where the monster in question is simply one of the numerous crocodiles infesting the river. One may also recall the Egyptian custom of the bride of the Nile, as it may be called. We may admit the correctness of all these observations and yet doubt the genesis as proposed by the great English scholar. In the first place, the story is found all over the Old World, even in countries—like Japan—where there are no crocodiles. Secondly, one would have to assume, to judge from the vast number of variants, that in former times people were as much addicted to wholesale human sacrifice as were the ancient Aztecs; thirdly, that in the New World, where the story was originally not found, no such custom existed and that the American alligators were less propitiated than the Old World crocodiles. In the fourth place, we know only too well how sensitive people are with regard to the importance of such sacrifice. Even now certain peoples in the heart of Europe refuse to save a drowning person, adducing as a reason, sincerely no doubt, that the river must not be deprived of its victim. A Perseus bold enough to interfere with such a practice would therefore have run great risk of being slain by the populace before he had a chance to fight the monster. In the last place, how does it happen that in certain countries, India and Persia, the victim is preferably a boy and practically never a girl? Is it to be argued that in those countries the victim was always male, whilst in the rest of the Old World it was female? I am rather inclined to believe that the tale originated in one place, though it is practically impossible to determine it—the number of motives is far too small—and that from there it migrated to all parts of the Old World. The story, extremely simple and presupposing only the most rudimentary of psychic reactions, the idea of chivalry in the male, no doubt originated in prehistoric times.

The reader may well ask by this time with M. Bédier why it is that tales migrate from certain countries to certain others, why certain countries, that is, should have the privilege of manufacturing stories for the benefit of others as it were. Th. Benfey had tried to answer that very question when he connected his

Indianist theory with the work of the Buddhist propagandists. Under the fervour of religious impulse, he argued, stories in the shape of *exempla*, of parables, were scattered wherever Buddhist missionaries laboured, both in the Far East and in the Mediterranean countries. It would be vain to deny that there is a good deal of truth in this assumption. The famous romance of *Barlaam and Josaphat*, essentially of an edifying nature, was undoubtedly spread in Persia by Buddhist propagandists, and the wholesale importation of motives current in the ancient Sanskrit literature into China and Japan is due to the same religious movement. Where I venture to differ from Benfey, siding with M. Bédier, is over the former scholar's slight overrating of oral tradition at the expense of the written one. After all, the translation into Chinese and Pehlevi of Buddhist compilations written in Sanskrit had certainly as far-reaching effects as any oral propagation of *exempla*, certainly among an essentially literary people such as the ancient Chinese. Where Benfey was manifestly wrong was in his ascription to India exclusively of all the master-tales that have cheered mankind as far back as we have any historical knowledge of the human race. Such an assumption was after all a gross exaggeration, and India is, as we have seen, an important enough centre of story-telling but by no means the *only* important one. Neither is it admissible always to associate the diffusion of tales with some religious movement. Some other, more deep-lying, reason must be sought to account for the phenomenon.

Story-telling is no doubt identical with what in the history of literature is called the ' prose narrative '. The fact that the one requires pen and ink whilst the other is transmitted from mouth to ear is merely accidental and has no other consequence than a greater degree of independence of the different variants, Now good prose narrative is not a gift common to all peoples any more than the art of story-telling is a gift common to all individuals. Certain ones will excel in it, whilst others are indifferent or downright inferior. The Ionians possessed the art in supreme degree ; in Attica it was more or less of an Ionian importation ; the Spartans lacked it altogether and, being well aware of this shortcoming, gloried in Laconic conciseness, i.e. dryness. The ancient Hebrews excelled in the art ; witness the Old Testament, the Talmud and the Midrash ; Rome in her greatness did not produce a single good *raconteur*, for Petronius was a cosmopolitan steeped in Hellenic culture, and Apuleius a Semite. Similarly, in the Middle Ages, the master story-tellers were three nations ; the French, the Irish, and the Icelanders, to which one might add the half-Oriental Byzantine Greeks and the Arabs.

The result of this state of affairs is that those who have give to those who lack, and exchange with those who also have. Illustrations will come to mind at once. Herodotus went to Athens to be admired; in his native Ionia he would not have attracted much attention. The Romans plundered Hellenic mythology on a large scale—certainly not for religious reasons. The Greeks, especially the late Greeks, borrowed from the Semites the Aḥikar Romance, from the Syrians the *Book of Sindibad*, from the Alexandrian Jews the story of the *Emperor and the Abbot*, from the Egyptians the tale of the *Master Thief*. The Hebrews took from the Greeks the story of Minos and Scylla, attributing the adventure to Moses and a Sudanese princess, from the Semitized Persians the Esther story, from India the tale of the Brahmins resuscitating a lion and most of the stories of their Solomon cycle. In the Middle Ages French fiction dominated the European continent, and French romances were translated even into Czech and Icelandic. Middle English and Middle High German narrative art are unthinkable without the omnipresent French influence. The Irish prose saga not only left a deep impress upon Welsh literature; it migrated directly to England, France, Iceland, and went as far south as Italy and Spain. The Old Norse prose narrative, as cultivated in Iceland, gave themes to the Irish, the English, and the continental Germans. Byzantine and Arabic themes in the same period flooded all Europe reaching the West and North by three main routes, through Spain, through the French crusaders and through Russia.

A few examples, chiefly from Western and Northern Europe, and with India out of the game, will help to elucidate the foregoing statements. Mention has been made, in a previous chapter, of the strange tale relating how the hero imagines that he has undergone all sorts of adventures, taking years, in the Otherworld, only to discover in the end that it was all an illusion and that only a few minutes have passed. This story, we know, has its origin in the Oriental hashish dream; but it reached Ireland in the early Middle Ages and assumed there a typical Irish form. The hero is called away from a feast by fairy messengers who request him to assist one party of fairies against another in the bright Tir-na-nogue. The war ended, he is given a fairy wife with whom he lives contented and has a family. After many years (as he thinks) he wants to revisit Ireland and on coming home finds his companions still sitting around the caldron where he had left them. This story reached Italy and was there incorporated in the oldest collection of *novelle*. The Italians slightly modified it, changing the Irish feast into a banquet given by the emperor Frederick II and the Irish fairies into magicians. The Oriental parallels which have the same origin, i.e. the hashish dream, are altogether different, and thus there is no getting around the Irish medium. Nor is the fact in itself surprising: the Danish and Anglo-Norman invasions had driven forth too many Irishmen who had sought a new home on the European Continent.[25] Yet there is still more to the strange theme under discussion.

In the fourteenth century the Spanish prince Juan Manuel wrote a collection of tales which do not compare unfavourably with those of the *Decameron*. One of these has for scene the old city of Toledo, famous for the magic arts taught there by Arabic sages. The hero is precisely such an one, who is sought after by an ambitious ecclesiastic of the Christian persuasion eager to become an adept in magic. Nor is he miserly in good promises. While they are still sitting in the savant's cabinet, successive messengers arrive announcing promotions and preferments to the ecclesiastic. Each time the magician asks him for a favour and is refused. When finally he becomes too insistent, the worthy canon threatens him with the Inquisition. Then he calls out and has two turkeys brought in, which he had ordered to be fried at the beginning of the interview, and the good canon realizes that all he has witnessed was but an illusion, that only a short time has elapsed and that the magician has merely wanted to sound his true character—and succeeded.

At first blush one would without hesitation ascribe this tale to the Oriental art and ultimately to the hashish dream. The environment, at all events, is as Oriental as any environment can well be. Yet there is more to the tale. An Icelandic text relates the following events. A certain viking is lying with a small fleet in the harbour of a certain town. His circumstances are none too brilliant when a magician accosts him and offers to bring about his marriage with the widowed princess ruling over that town. In return he exacts only a trifling tribute. The viking is only too glad to consent to the proposal. Everything works out well, as he believes; he marries the heiress, obtains wealth enough and for some time even keeps the promise given. But after a while he tires of the magician and bluntly repels him—only to see himself again on his viking ship in the harbour, a poor bachelor. What he had believed to be years had been but a dream of a few minutes, brought about by the magician who wanted to test him. It is of course clear that this story cannot possibly be dissociated from the Spanish tale cited before, nor from the Irish story that had wandered as far as Italy. With the former it shares the motive of the test and the hero's ingratitude, with the latter the illusory marriage. The environment, to be sure, is neither Oriental nor Irish, but typically Scandinavian. We shall not be far wrong if we assume that this story, ultimately of Oriental origin (the hashish dream basis), was worked up by the Irish and transmitted by them to the Spaniards on the one hand, to the Icelanders on the other.

In Mediaeval Iceland we find the strange story of a wise master coming to offer his services as tutor to a king's son. The monarch has enough confidence in him to set a lonely house apart for the two, and there they live for a number of years, undisturbed by the noise of the world. However, the teacher never pronounces a word, nor does the prince ask questions. In the end, of course, a great and very important lesson is imparted. This story is unknown in the rest of Europe but occurs in the Egyptian redaction of the *Nights* and in a modern Egyptian folk-tale. It is virtually certain that this tale owes its diffusion to the mediaeval clerks who first brought it from the Orient to France and from there carried it to Iceland. As a matter of fact, the Icelandic redactor of the book containing it is known to have been a student at the Sorbonne.[26]

The idea of putting a number of stories in a ' frame ', no doubt to create a unity that would otherwise be lacking and to heighten the interest of hearer or reader, is unquestionably Indian. The best example is not the *Panchatantra,* where the device is decidedly overdone, one story being boxed into another which is again boxed into a third, and so forth, a procedure which makes it extremely difficult for the reader to follow the general outline, whilst for a hearer it would be a sheer impossibility. This compilation is thereby sufficiently shown to be late in time, though its materials may of course be, and no doubt are, very old indeed. The *Vetalapanchavinçati* and the *Tales of a Throne* are vastly simpler in structure and therefore, in this point at least, more primitive than the *Panchatantra* even in its oldest ascertainable form. The *Book of Sindibad,* the *Tuti-Nameh,* and the *Forty Vazirs* hark back to the same Indian models, and so does, in the last analysis, the huge compilation, composed of the most incongruous elements, that goes under the name of *Arabian Nights.* In the West the *Disciplina clericalis* no doubt followed an Arabic model, but the didactic character of the frame was in its turn imitated in the rest of Europe, the Spanish work of Juan Manuel already quoted being only one of its numerous derivatives. The simple device of inserting a shorter tale or episode in a novel or an epic by putting it in the mouth of one of the characters, is of course far older and goes back to the Ionian narrative art and to

Homer. Nor is there any necessity for supposing Oriental models for Boccaccio's frame, simple and natural as it is. But it was the West and Celtic Europe that improved upon the Oriental 'frame' by the device, simple enough and yet unknown elsewhere, of putting the adventures told in the various tales in an even closer relationship to the frame by revealing at the end that the chief hero of the frame (or one of them) is identical with the leading character of some or all the adventures reported in the tales. This improvement is unknown in the Orient, and the only parallel that might be adduced is the purely mechanical identification of the speaker with the hero of the tale he has just told as found in the Indian *Jatakam*. This collection, as goes without saying, was absolutely unknown in Mediaeval Europe, and the device under discussion is therefore the work of the European story-tellers who first utilized it, that is, the Irish. An illustration will help the reader to a full understanding of this improvement.

> An old thief who is repenting of his trade and mending his ways, disadvises his three sons from following his former career. Thinking no doubt that the old man is in his dotage, the sons, far from listening to him, set out to steal the state horse of a queen and are captured. The father, who goes to ransom them, is told by the queen to relate his most fearful adventures. This he does, telling among other things how at the risk of his life he once freed a woman and her child from a group of monsters. In the end the queen reveals herself as having been that very woman, and of course she lets his sons go free.

This tale from Campbell's collection of West Highland stories is undoubtedly derived from the mediaeval *Dolopathos*, yet it is a noteworthy fact that in that version nothing whatever is said about the identity of the queen with the persecuted woman freed by the robber. This little touch is then doubtless an addition of the Celtic story-teller.[27]

The rest of Europe was very slow in following up this improvement; as a matter of fact, one has to wait until the nineteenth century with the publication of W. Hauff's fairy tales, to see this scheme carried into effect.

Irish prose narrative is responsible for a whole type of Icelandic literature: the so-called *útilegumannasögur*, i.e. sagas of outlaws.[28] A common tale-type runs thus. The daughter of an Icelandic farmer disappears without leaving traces. Some time later the same farmer's flock of sheep disappears as mysteriously. The farmer goes in search of his animals, is surprised by a magic mist, and when it lifts finds himself in a valley of rare beauty the like of which he has never beheld. There he finds his sheep and his daughter, the latter as the wife of an outlaw who had taken refuge in this solitude, the valley being inhabited by outlaws only, who here lead the peaceful life of Icelandic farmers. So deep rooted was the belief in valleys of this sort that as late as the eighteenth century expeditions were sent out for their discovery. Yet the facts presented are as unreal as they can possibly be. There are no such valleys in that lonely and ice-bound isle, and the episode of the magic mist and other incidents indicate that those outlaws are really superhuman and ought to have put the Icelanders on their guard. As a matter of fact, those valleys are but dim reflections of the *tir-na-nogue*, the Land of Youth so prominent in the Irish sagas; the magic mist is the well-known druidical mist no less common in Irish narrative art, and the outlaws are only Icelandic *avatars* of the Irish fairies.

Icelandic literature and folk-lore are crammed with motives of undoubted Celtic, that is Irish, origin. There is the well-known tale so charmingly told by the Wife of Bath: the ugly hag who turns into a most beautiful woman upon the performance of a certain ceremony, not always of a nature approved of by Puritans.[29] It is as current in Iceland as it is on the Continent and in England, or rather was, in mediaeval times. There is the story of the Hag of Slaughter, resuscitating the fallen warriors of her own party, thus compelling the enemy, already tired out and wellnigh exhausted, to continue the murderous battle on the following day and again on the following, until her trick is discovered by a new-comer who, suspecting some witchery of the kind, watches the battlefield at night and slays the hag.[30] There is the final scene of a long epic struggle: the hero, Grettir the Strong, has resisted all attacks made on him; then his enemies have recourse to witchcraft and suborn an old sorceress to bring on his ruin by evil spells. It was taken, if not from the last episode, at least from one of the last, of the Irish saga of Dermat and Grania; Finn's old nurse was the prototype for the nurse of Thorbjörn Angle, Grettir's deadly foe.[31] There is the tale of the bewitched husband who slays his wives, until the last of these receives a revelation in a dream, from one of her unfortunate predecessors, as to how to save herself. That story, in modified form and with a tragic ending, is the centre-piece of the Breton legend of Kamorre: it also forms part of an Icelandic *útilegumannasaga*.[32] The gruesome tale of the weaving witches announcing the disaster of Clontarf is fairly unique in Norse literature; it is a commonplace in Irish legend.[33] A whole book might be written on the indebtedness of Icelandic fiction to the literature of Mediaeval Ireland. There is no danger that such a book should be forthcoming soon: pursuits of this sort do not square with the ideal of progressive Americanization which has at the present moment taken hold of Western Europe after the greatest folly in human history.

Ireland was, however, not the only country to furnish the Scandinavian North with master-tales. Throughout the Middle Ages there existed a connexion between Scandinavia and the countries of the Near East through Byzantium. Thus the ancient story of the Thessalian Cyanippus who neglects his wife for the pleasure of the chase, so delightfully told by Parthenius, turns up in Mediaeval Norway in an episode of the *þiðreks Saga*, whilst no Latin medium has been discovered to this day.[34] Furthermore, the Norse *Friðþjófs Saga*, with its strange motives of the old king ceding his wife to a friend and the sex taboo of Balder's temple, is no native of Northern Europe at all but is derived directly from the Semitic East, as has been convincingly shown by Dr. Gould in a recent study.[35]

Nor is it to be supposed that the Scandinavians only took and never gave. The Celtic Tristan story, having grown out of the Irish saga of Dermat and Grania,[36] has attained its mediaeval form only by contamination with the Norse Sigurd legend. Here is a brief outline of the situation obtaining in the three stories. In *Dermat and Grania* the heroine, overcome by the power of her companion's 'love-spots', causes herself to be abducted by him, hence the deadly feud between her husband Finn and her lover Dermat. In the Norse Sigurd legend the hero, though bound to one woman, is overcome by a magic drink and contracts another union, hence the feud of the two queens, ending in the hero's death. In the Tristan legend the Irish 'love spot' has been replaced by the Norse potion which has for effect, not forgetfulness as in the Norse original, but the opposite, an unconquerable passion, as in the Irish tale. More, in *Dermat and Grania* there can be no question of adultery in the logical sense of the word, if one grants the woman the right to dissolve a union at will and to contract another one, that is, the simple right which the husband has or used to have in Jewish and Islamic society. Nor is there mention of adultery in the Norse Sigurd story: Brunhild expressly tells Sigurd that she does not care for two men in one hall. By comparison the Tristan story reads like a supplement of the Sigurd Legend: Isolt *has* two men in one hall. One gains the impression that the British author (to use the most general term) deliberately set to work to exploit a situation hinted at in the Norse lay.

Irish-Scandinavian influences combined and Scandinavian influences singly are clearly noticeable on the Continent. Here are only a few examples. In an early twelfth-century French epic poem, preserved only in fragments, we witness a genuine Norman invasion in the region called Pontieu, in Northern France. The leaders are true to type, an old sea-wolf, called Gormond, a fairly common Norse name of the period, and his son-in-law, a Frenchman called Isembard, with a good Teutonic name, as we see, who has turned renegade, having abandoned the Christian religion and embraced the faith of Othin. The battle which ensues is historically well attested. An attempted identification of the Norse leader has led only into chronological difficulties[37]; and when we come to an identification of the renegade or *margarit*, as he is called in Byzantine fashion, we are completely at sea, for no French noble is known to have abandoned the faith of his fathers to embrace Teutonic paganism, to say nothing of his going to Scandinavia there to marry a Norwegian princess. On the other hand, a few points of some importance, it would seem, have been completely neglected in this connexion. They are, first, that renegades of this type, though rare in France, were extremely common in Ireland, for not only did converted Scandinavians quite often go back to their old faith (witness the viking Broder, the slayer of King Brian Boru), but even native Irishmen turned pagans, acting no doubt on the maxim that the god of the victors is the stronger and the stronger god the better. In the second place, to turn Scandinavian, in those days, one did not have to go to Norway; Dublin and York sufficed completely and were nearer at hand. In the third place, there was many a Scandinavian king who owned not a square foot of ground in Norway but had a kingdom at Waterford, at Limerick, or in Dublin. Finally, the French text is careful to mention *Irois*, i.e., probably, Irish Scandinavians, among the troops marshalled by Gormond and his son-in-law. To these purely objective deductions let us add a more subjective one. The epic in question distinguishes itself by a softness in tone completely absent in the *chansons de geste* of the period. The renegade still loves his native soil and secretly hopes for the victory of the French king; he has renounced God the Father, but he refuses to renounce the Virgin. Such tones are essentially Irish, and he who found them was probably an Irish monk connected with the French abbey of St. Riquier near Saucourt, where the battle was fought. That abbey, as M. Bédier has shown, had a direct interest in keeping alive the memories of the battle. Whether in the eleventh century any memory lingered in the district concerning it, M. Bédier rightly doubts. The names of the protagonists any chronicle could furnish, and no doubt did furnish. But the touching story of the *margarit* and the emotions that tore his heart while his hand wielded the sword, did not have its root in France; it is a migratory legend which originated in the Ireland of the Viking period. It belongs, then, to the numerous class of Viking legends which arose in the British Isles, composed as they are of Anglo-Saxon, Scandinavian and Celtic elements, legends like the *Tristan*, already discussed, the Havelock saga, the Horn saga, the Hamlet legend, and the famous tale of Ragnar Lodbrok and his sons.[38]

However, the Scandinavian countries loomed large enough in the Middle Ages to exert a direct action on the folk-lore of the Continent and without the Irish-English medium noticeable in the preceding group of tales. A few illustrations will prove helpful. There is a story telling of a bogle that haunts a mill, much to the miller's annoyance. The bogle is finally pretty badly treated by a bear left there by a wandering juggler and thereupon forsakes the mill. Some time later he comes back and inquires from the miller whether the 'big brown cat' is still alive. The miller is careful to inform him that it is and has seven little ones. At which news the bogle disappears for good and all. The tale is presumed to have originated in Scandinavia, whence it was carried to Central Europe about 1060 on the occasion of the Icelander Andun's visit to Denmark with a polar bear, a present given to the Danish king Svein by Harald Hardrade. Later the story was carried to various points of the Continent, and is now found in many parts of Europe in Teutonic, Slavonic, and Romance variants.[39]

Mention has already been made of the story of the *Sparrows of Cirencester*, spread by the Scandinavians over Western and Northern Europe, from England to Russia. Another stratagem attributed to the Normans and doubtless propagated by them in their own interest is the tale of the captain who feigns death, whilst his men request and obtain for him burial in the cathedral church of the besieged city. When the gates are thrown open, the 'dead' man comes to life, and his band is not long in seizing the fortress and massacring its inhabitants. The story is localized by the Norman-French historians at Luna, a Tuscan city wiped out by the vikings, whilst Saxo Grammaticus tells it on the occasion of a Danish expedition into the Baltic provinces. Norman by diffusion, if not by origin (a similar tale occurs in the Orient), is the jolly episode of the prince who dazzles the inhabitants of a foreign city by his luxury; he will have his horses shod with silver horseshoes. The story is told of several Norman princes, of Robert, the eldest son of William the Conqueror, for example, but also of the Norwegian king Sigurd the Crusader.[40]

In a good number of the migratory legends considered thus far one can distinguish the class of people active in the work of propagation. The Irish scholar living in exile, the Norman soldier anxious to ' bluff ', the Scandinavian or Anglo-Saxon epic poet searching for new material, the goliard, the returning crusader, the juggler, and the cleric: the activity of all these classes is clearly discernible in the various tales, and one cannot imagine the tale of the bogle and the bear being told by a scholar any more than that of Tannhäuser and Pope Urban IV by a priest of the Church, unless he were an excommunicated one who had joined the ranks of the *vagantes*. But it is precisely the rôle of the clergy which of necessity comes in for what is probably the largest share in the diffusion of migratory tales. This important fact need cause no surprise, seeing that the mediaeval clergy was the only literary class and hence the only one to which the written tradition was no less accessible than the oral. That as a class the clergy should work primarily for the Church is natural enough, but folk-lore does not lose its character by being put down in more or less correct ecclesiastical Latin and attached to the saints of the Church.

One of the most curious of these saints is Saint Eustachius, or Placidas, as he was called in private life. An old account related the banal fact that he and his family, some time during the reign of Trajan, had suffered martyrdom in the Roman arena. How far this is true we do not know ; but it is of little importance since in that form, the nucleus of the story, Eustachius-Placidas is merely a name and as good as any other, the essential fact which cannot be denied being the martyrdom of a considerable number of people of the same religious tenets and the same unwillingness to compromise. This threadbare tale was rightly considered insufficient by some enterprising cleric, who thereupon decided to make it more interesting by adding more matter. To obtain this, he fused an Indian tale of Buddhistic colouring, if not of Buddhist origin, telling of the trials of a pacifist king, his wife and his family of twins, with the Mediterranean Clement Romance, which had developed out of a Greek novel likewise constructed on a Dioscuric basis. The martyrdom required that the hero should be a private citizen ; the wars which drove the Indian king from his throne suggested that he should be a general. In this form the legend served to replace an unknown pagan Dioscuric cult. Later, when that purpose was fulfilled, the Church did whatever it could to obliterate the traces of Dioscurism occurring in the tale, without success. The ancient twin-tale of Indian provenance continued to live, of course, a life far more humble than that of its ecclesiastical avatar, only to come to the surface again in the Middle Ages, assuming literary form in a number of Old French, Middle English and Middle High German compositions, *with* the twin features the Church legend had partly lost. I have been able here to sketch only very briefly the history of that story, fascinating in the extreme, since it extends over a period of probably more than three thousand years and migrated over an area reaching from Celebes to Spain.[41]

Quite as interesting, though less ambitious, is the story of the warrior saints Amicus and Amelius. Their origin, like that of Placidas and his family, is anything but Christian. They were a pair of Celtic Dioskouroi who in antiquity were identified with the Boreades, slain, as is well known, by Herakles when encountered by him as they were returning from the funeral games of Pelias. In the Middle Ages, Amicus and Amelius were canonized and became warrior-saints, still worshipped in the same region, not far from Mortara in Lombardy. Even the story of their slaughter remained unaltered, though Herakles was replaced by Ogier of Denmark, the popular figure of the Carolingian legendary cycle. Lying close to the great pilgrim-road which led from France into Italy, the sanctuary and its heroes attracted the attention of the French *jongleurs*, who popularized the legend beyond its homeland, and it finally became known from one end of Europe to the other.[42]

Of purely ecclesiastical origin, too, is the touching story of Pope Gregory who prayed for the soul of the Emperor Trajan. The legend, or rather this particular part of it, was known in the Near East in pre-Islamic times; and the hero who by his prayers induces the soul of a man long since dead and suffering in Hell to come back into the body, to live life over again, though a more edifying one to be sure, to receive baptism, to die again and to be saved, is Christ himself. True enough, the Christian text is lost, but the Mohammedan version we know leaves no doubt whatever about its former existence. There can be no uncertainty that priests carried it from the Orient to the Occident in the first place and that it was finally linked up, again by priests, with the name of the famous pope.[43]

The legend of the *bocca della verità*, as it may be called, is semi-learned, if not downright clerical. It centres in a certain monument representing a wild animal with gaping mouth. Any person taking an oath will put his hand in the mouth of the statue, and if the oath is false the mouth is believed to close and to bite off the miscreant's hand. The tale usually goes on to narrate how a woman's wiles got the better of the magic statue, which thereupon in great disgust ceased to function. In Europe the story is not connected with any monument which can even remotely be supposed to have been responsible for its origin. In Asia the tale is linked with the emperor Julian the Apostate and a statue of Mercury which punished him in precisely that fashion. In Asia, too, though not in Asia exclusively, are found statuettes of carnivorous animals holding in their gaping mouths human limbs, that is, hands or legs. The story may therefore be considered to have originated in such a statue, to have become connected with the emperor Julian, and then to have migrated to Italy, no doubt with the co-operation of the clergy. A learned or semi-learned tradition, it then spread among the people and ended up by being the story as we know it from more than a dozen variants, mostly hailing from Italy.[44]

Of a similar type are the many stories about talismans, so common in the Middle Ages. A talisman, in this restricted and essentially mediaeval sense, is simply a statue or picture with which is bound up the fate of a community, city or empire. Thus the Palladium of Troy is a talisman in that sense ; once it was taken by the enemy, the city was doomed. The notion itself is not Hellenic, however, but typically Asiatic. Hence it was that when the Arabs had seized half of the Mediterranean shores the concept of magic statues as palladia or talismans spread like wildfire. Here are only a few of the most characteristic migratory legends sprung from that root. When the Visigoth kingdom in Spain had fallen before the onslaught of the Arabs and in consequence of its own rottenness, the last king, the unfortunate Rodrick, was fabled to have violated an ancient tower at Toledo, the talisman of the Gothic kingdom. He had penetrated into the building and opened a certain chest. In it he had found a picture representing the Moors, or an inscription pointing out the catastrophe to come, or both. The same tale is found in China, where it is told of the tyrant Tsin-Schî-Huang, said to have broken into the tomb of Confucius and met with much the same prophecy. The story is of quite a venerable age, having been connected, in antiquity, with a Babylonian temple, called Belus' Tower and the name of the Persian King Xerxes.[45] Nay, it lived on in Mesopotamia down to early mediaeval times, since in the Persian chronicles and Firdusi's *Book of Kings* it is related of the Sasanid monarch Hormuzd IV and a secret chest transmitted to him by his father.[46]

In Constantinople itself, as the memories of the golden past began to fade and Orientalism waxed strong, the old statues, most of them no longer understood, acquired the reputation of talismans. Some of these were believed not only to be connected with the fate of the Empire in a general way but with certain events which had befallen the latter or were still to befall it. Thus a certain relief representing the scaling of a wall from the ships below was, after 1204, interpreted as having foreshadowed, or maybe brought on, the Frankish invasion. Another statue was destroyed by the mob because its gesture was suspected to be one of beckoning the Western barbarians to come on.[47] A Byzantine historian took a statue representing the deadly struggle between a hippopotamus and a crocodile as a *symbol* of the internecine struggle of the Frankish crusaders. What to the man of letters appeared as a symbol may well have been more to the populace at large. At all events, an idea of this type is no doubt at the base of the famous fight between the white and the red dragon as described by Nennius and Geoffrey of Monmouth.[48] The snake-fight itself is a well-known Near Eastern motive, occurring in about a dozen different variants, some of which go back to pre-Islamic times. This much is certain: the legend in question is neither Celtic nor Teutonic but a migratory legend imported from Asia.

The concept of the Talisman is also behind the numerous legends of the magician Vergil. To drive off the flies, he constructed a brazen fly, just as according to *Exodus* Moses, to stay the snake plague, had made a brazen serpent. To give speedy warning of a hostile invasion, he constructed a tower with statues or bells, each statue or bell representing a definite nation or tribe. Vergil without any shadow of doubt is a creature of Italian folk-lore—folk-lore in its widest sense, because learned, semi-learned and genuine popular currents flow here side by side and more than once intermingle—but the stories which have become attached to his name are vastly older and as un-Italian as can be. They belong, with very few exceptions, to what Oswald Spengler calls the ' magic soul ', although they are far older even than Spengler's ' magic ' cycle of civilization. But their home, at all events, is the Near East, and it is significant that before becoming attached to Vergil quite a number of these stories were told of Hippokrates or Daidalos—that is, of Grecian characters.

Moreover, Vergil's magic fly, designed to drive off all flies, forcibly reminds one not only of the brazen serpent of Moses (*Num.* xxi. 9) but also of the Carthaginian custom of burying underneath the houses metal images of certain noxious animals, especially scorpions, designed either to protect the inhabitants from such vermin or to put these animals themselves to a speedy rout. In Constantinople, three serpents twisted into a tripod of bronze (a well-known sculptural motive), were interpreted in no other way, and when the tripod was taken away by Mohammed II the snakes were fabled to have reappeared in the city.

Under the same heading, that of migratory legends of learned and semi-learned origin, must be classed the many stories which succeeded in becoming incrustated as it were in the structure of a great missionary religion. One of the best known of these is of course the myth of Lucifer's Fall. The pre-exilic Jews were ignorant of it, and the very idea of the Evil One is known to have originated with the Semitized Persians who were settled in or near Mesopotamia, close neighbours of the transplanted Jews. The name of Lucifer, the morning star, slipped in as a consequence of a rabbinical misinterpretation of an *Isaiah* passage. The course run by the legend, through Judaism, Christianity, Islam and various sects which cannot be properly said to belong to any one of the three is a matter of common knowledge, and no reader of Milton will deny that the legend is one of the most marvellous, though also one of the most fateful, that were ever conceived by the human brain.

What is fair to the monotheistic religions is equally so to Buddhism, and it is well to mention in passing a genuine migratory legend of rare literary beauty which would, so far as we may judge, never have reached such vast numbers of human beings had it not first been told of the founder of that most humane of all religions. I refer, of course, to the touching story of the young prince who, on leaving his royal splendour, for the first time in his life comes into contact with human misery and death. That story is of such beauty and power that neither Christianity nor Islam have scrupled to take it over, attributing it, of course, to personages of the rank of their own saints.

The fundamental theme, that of the vanity of all earthly things, no doubt the highest philosophical insight man is capable of, although we may not at all adopt the Buddhist solution, was used in many variants by the ancient Indians after their great civilization had run its course, as it had toward Buddha's time. Yet the theme is always clearly discernible. Thus one variant relates how the prince tires of all his splendour, how even in the beauty of the music girls sent to entertain him he sees only human nature, doomed to decay, decrepit old age and a speedy death. Not all of the variants are known in the West at the time of this writing ; yet there must have been many more. When reading, some time ago, the old Sasanid chronicle of Tabarî, I ran across the following tale.[49]

The Arab prince Nu'mân, after having conquered a good many of his neighbours and invaded even the Roman province of Syria, one morning stepped to the window of his royal apartment, and he beheld lying before him an orchard in all the beauty of the Mesopotamian spring. And he rejoiced in the sight and said to his vazîr, 'Hast thou ever seen anything like it?' The vazîr replied, 'No, if only it were enduring!'—'What then *is* enduring?' was the monarch's retort.—'Only what is with God in heaven, and thou canst gain it only by renouncing this world.' And Nu'mân laid down the government that same day, took off his royal garments, to put on rags in their stead, left his palace, and went into the wide world, as a poor and lonely pilgrim, never again to appear.

It is a variant of the old theme of Prince Gautama who on first issuing from his royal palace beholds sickness, misery, and death, and who then tires of this life, a theme carried to Persia by Buddhist propagandists and then ascribed to that brilliant and chivalrous Arab prince, no doubt for the same reason that Jewish writers will ascribe to Alexander the Great his journey to Paradise, where he is shown how the human eye covets the universe but is covered with a little handful of dust.

Nor was Persia open to Buddhist influences only. In an ancient Pehlevi work we find the following maxim[50]:

> When you want to sit down on a seat at a wedding banquet, do not choose a seat high up, lest they pull you away from that seat and put you on a seat farther down.

The maxim and the imagery are the same as those of a New Testamental parable recounted by Luke. Whether the old Persian writer was familiar with the gospels is highly doubtful. What is more likely is that both the Pehlevi text and the parable of Luke go back to a common original current in the lands where Aramaic was spoken.

Above all, the influence of the extremely rich Jewish narrative literature cannot be over-estimated in its influence both on Christianity and Islam. One of the best examples which can be quoted in this connexion is the famous parable of the Angel and the Hermit, made immortal by Voltaire.

> A pious hermit conceives serious doubts on the question whether everything is really for the best in the best of all possible worlds, as his faith in an all-good and all-wise deity requires him to believe. To solve the matter for him, an angel takes him on a journey and does, in his

presence, a number of seemingly irrational things. The explanation finally given in the Jewish archetype briefly amounts to this, that without the angel's action things would have gone even worse. Man's understanding is simply not great enough to judge correctly the chain of cause and effect.

Now it is interesting to note that both Christianity and Islam carried into the story certain transcendental notions which did not occur to the Jewish author; and it is equally significant that under the hands of the eighteenth-century deists, such as Parnell and Voltaire, the story again sloughed off these transcendental elements. The episode in Voltaire's *Zadig*, as a matter of fact, clearly ends with a note of doubt which, it is needless to say, rather adds to the quiet and humane beauty of the ancient narrative.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to separate, in the discussion of European and Asiatic migratory legends, the classical from the ecclesiastical tradition. For both were propagated through learned media, as a rule by ecclesiastics or by people with ecclesiastical training or leanings. This important factor is not always understood in Protestant countries, but it is an undisputed fact from the time when the new religion began to attract good minds from among the Graeco-Roman world into its own ranks. Whatever classical lore is found, in Northern France, the British Isles, Germany, and Scandinavia including Iceland, was carried thither from classical soil by the priests of the Roman Church. Once acclimatized, the classical material was capable of being transformed in various ways, of becoming, in other words, a genuine part of Western and Northern European folk-lore.[51] Many of the Vergil stories referred to above might be quoted under this head, but the material is really so great that one may speak of an *embarras de richesse*.

An ancient Greek legend speaks of the master-builder Daidalos and his jealousy, a quality attributed to intellectuals all over the known world and based, no doubt, upon correct observation. This jealousy led him to slay his own nephew, the son of his sister. In Mediaeval Greece we find the same story, ascribed, now, to the physician Hippocrates. In this form the tale migrated to Western Europe, in or before the age of the crusades. It became incorporated in the Western branch of the *Book of Sindibad*, the romance of the *Seven Sages of Rome*,[52] as it is called, but it also penetrated into Ireland, where it was attributed to the leech Dian-Cecht, guilty of precisely the same crime.

In Aristophanes' *Clouds*, Socrates is drawn up in a basket and remains hanging half-way, dangling in the air. In Mediaeval

Europe the same story is told, of the master-magician Vergil, of course, who is fabled to have been tricked in this fashion by a fair one. The tale enjoyed great popularity and has been transmitted in a large number of variants.

The Ancient Greek legend of Eriphyle, one of the central figures of the ancient epic of the *Alkmaionis*, lingered on in Syria, and in Islamic times was fused with the Biblical story of Balaam, the latter prophet being induced to curse the Israelites by his wife, who had been bribed by the king of Balka, the bitter enemy of the Jews.[53]

The Oedipus legend underwent a curious transformation in the Occident. The figure of the Sphinx being no longer understood, the hero was converted into a general who frees his mother's city from a besieging host and then is offered her hand in reward.

The classical story of Meleager, whose life, by a decree of the Moirai, is bound up with a fire-brand, was in the same manner carried north to Mediaeval Iceland, where the Hellenic Moirai were of course replaced by the Scandinavian Norns, whilst the hero was called Nornagest. The legend could without difficulty become acclimatized in Teutonic countries because the fundamental idea, the comparison of life with a flame, appears to belong to the oldest fund of Teutonic folk-lore. At the same time it is worth noting that whilst in the Greek tale the motive is simply used to narrate the terrible struggle in the heart of the hero's mother and his own premature death, the Scandinavians allowed the hero to reach a respectable old age, three times as long as the life of ordinary men, in order to make him recount with much satisfaction the many strange things he has seen and heard and his encounter with some of the most famous heroes of olden times. It might be mentioned in passing that this last bit of fiction is a favourite motive in narrative art. The Greeks were perfectly familiar with it; witness the garrulous old hero Nestor. It had probably a good deal to do with the conferring upon the Norwegian Starkaðr a similar longevity, and when in Irish saga Saint Patrick resuscitates an old bard of the Finn cycle, the purpose of this at first sight strange invention is equally obvious.

The curious tale of King Midas and his barber, known to be of Phrygian origin, became popular in Celtic Britain and Ireland, thanks to a version of the story found in Ovid and Servius' Vergil commentary. But it migrated equally far, if not farther, in an Eastern direction and is now current over an extremely large territory.

The same fate was shared, in Western Europe at least, by the episode of the white and the black sail occurring in the classical

Theseus legend. This story, again through the medium of Servius' commentary, was so popular in the West that in the Tristan legend it came to replace the old ending of that tragic story, the slaying of the lover by the husband with the help of a poisonous lance or spear, an ending which may be considered as proved, thanks to the close parallel of the Irish story of *Dermat and Grania.*

It would be methodologically wrong, however, to assume that the migration of classical stories to Northern Europe cannot have taken place before the definite establishment of Christianity in the West. A number of examples, not very many, it is true, proves the opposite. Thus the Teutonic figure of the smith Wayland is a curious combination of the classical Daidalos and Vulcan, whilst the forms of his name in the various Teutonic dialects are altogether obscure and defy phonetic laws. If the legend were Christian and classico-mediaeval, it would have remained closer to the prototype. There can therefore be little doubt that the tradition was only semi-learned, very probably a trade legend carried north by primitive craftsmen, somewhat similar to the wandering tinkers of more recent periods.

The same may be said of the Norse Loki legends. That Loki owes something to the Christian Lucifer is practically certain, but he owes infinitely more to the classical Prometheus. This fusion is unthinkable within the body of orthodox Christianity; it is highly probable as the work of gnostic sects living on the Hellenic-Iranian border and fusing classical with Zoroastrian elements.

Much the same state of facts obtains for the Norse Ragnarök and Balder legends. The former, centring in the idea of a general destruction of the universe by conflagration, no doubt antedates the Christian era. The doctrine was current in the Semitic and Zoroastrian religions from which Christianity was neither the first nor the only creed to borrow it: Stoicism had done so previously.

The Norse Balder legend has been shown to be a compound of legends connected with the Near Eastern mystery cults, so popular during the first centuries of our era.[54]

Migrations such as these may already be considered as prehistoric, especially if it is borne in mind that for Northern Europe history begins late. That human intercourse was intense enough, in prehistoric times, to favour the diffusion of legends admits of no doubt. The Andromeda legend mentioned above is a good case in point; so is the tale of the *Poison Damsel,* which must have reached Crete from India in Minoan times.[55] So is the famous Roman legend of Curtius, the knight who leaps into the yawning chasm to save his native town, a story which has its pendant in Asia Minor and was in all probability carried to Italy by the Etruscans.[56] So is the Roman legend of Tarpeia, a derivative of a certain Hellenic cycle of stories which, with its central motive of the *External Soul*, points to the coast of Gaza as the site of its origin. It is there, at all events, that the tale has come down in its most popular, though also probably most savage, form.[57]

The best illustration, however, that can be quoted in this connexion is the famous Teiresias biography as reported by Hesiod and discussed above.

It is well, before bringing this chapter to a close, to warn the reader of two important facts, lest he gain the quite erroneous impression that everything in this interesting field of oral folklore is well known and well ascertained and that there are no hidden corners badly in need of being cleared up. In the first place, it must not be supposed that the exact history of all or even of most migratory legends is known at the date of this writing. The ominous presence of a group of prehistoric legends just passed in review sufficiently indicates that such is not the case and presumably never will be. In the second place, the distinction between local and migratory legends, though here drawn for purely practical reasons, is by no means as well marked as the reader might possibly be led to suppose. A few words on both these points will therefore be helpful.

Among the migratory legends clearly still in need of investigation is the group of stories as a rule connected with the name of some 'magician', Dr. Faust for example. To consider all or even most of these stories as grown out of some historical fact would be quite beside the point, for precisely the same tale types were attached, long before the age of Faust and the Protestant Reformation, to the Icelandic magicians Perus or Saemundr, or even to a pope, Sylvester II. To enumerate a few, we find there the devil's pact, a number of pranks based upon hypnotization (such as converting a bundle of hay into a horse or giving the impression that a water-course is flowing where there is in reality dry ground, a story told already of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba), and fakir's tricks (such as making a plant grow up in no time). One of the most curious, however, is the tale of how the magician, condemned to be hanged, exchanges shapes with the hangman, so that the latter is hanged and the deceived spectators and (we may presume) the judge discover the trick when it is too late. The story is curious, I say, because in certain Gnostic writings the Founder of Christianity is said to have played precisely the same trick on Simon of Cyrene. By what channels such stories migrated we cannot be sure of knowing. Since, however, in the Middle Ages there flourished guilds addicted to white magic, often identical with certain heretical sects, one can dimly discern their diffusion from one end of Europe to the other.[58]

If a distinction has been drawn between local and migratory legend, it must not be supposed that for this reason the latter is incapable of becoming localized, attached as it were to definite places and even to definite personages. Precisely the opposite is true, as is shown by more than one of the many examples quoted in this chapter. Here I give only two additional ones.

A fable of Phaedrus, the freedman of Tiberius, reports the following incidents [59]:

> Two rivals, one of them rich and unprepossessing, the other poor and handsome, woo the same fair one. Naturally, only the former is accepted by the prospective father-in-law. A donkey is hired for the bride, and by accident it so happens that the animal is the property of the unsuccessful suitor. The wedding procession starts on its way. Venus, taking pity on the lovers, disperses the *cortège* by a sudden storm. The frightened donkey with the bride runs to his accustomed lodging where its master is sitting over his cups to drown his sorrow. Whilst the real bridegroom promises handsome rewards to any one who would find and recover his lost bride, his lucky rival
>
> dulces perficit
> Aequalitatis inter plausus nuptias.

This story was picked up by a mediaeval French *clerc*, Huon le Roi, with considerably more talent than Phaedrus, and the result was that the delightful story was transposed into a *courtois* environment. The two rivals are uncle and nephew; the former gets the better of the latter by a horrible treason of which nothing is said in the ancient story, and the peaceful donkey has been metamorphosed into a palfrey.[60]

In this form the tale migrated from France to Germany, carried thither, no doubt, by the mediaeval minstrels, and as a result it came to be localized at a castle in the Rhine country.[61]

The attachment of a migratory legend to a definite name is often the result of mere word play. For example, the story of the cranes of Ibykos, a typical migratory legend found all over the Old World, had originally nothing to do with the ancient Greek poet. The connexion was the consequence of an etymological equation of the name *Ἴβυϰος* = *ἴβυϰες* = 'cranes'.

Lastly, it may be well to caution the reader in regard to the question, not always easy to decide, whether a given story may be properly classed as a migratory legend, or whether polygenesis, i.e. independent growth out of a common basis, is not after all the more probable theory. Even a combination of the two is thinkable. Here only one example. Mention has been made above of the *Wife of Bath's Tale* with its episode of a metamorphosis of an ugly old hag into a rare beauty, no doubt a Celtic story. Yet the European Middle Ages were familiar also with precisely the opposite motive, the fair one all of a sudden turning out, much to the dismay of her admirer, a ghastly crone of horrible appearance. The *locus classicus* is a ballad dealing with the adventures of Thomas of Erceldoune, where we are told:

Thomas stood up in that stead
And beheld the lady gay:
Her hair it hung over her head,
Her eyes seemed out, they were so gray.

And all her clothing was awry
That he before saw in that stead;
Her one shank black, the other gray
And all her body like the lead.

Since Giraldus Cambrensis knows of a similar unpleasant experience, supposed to have been that of a Welshman named Meilerius, one might be tempted to regard this narrative as a typically Celtic story. Since, furthermore, there exists a Middle High German poem by Konrad von Würzburg, one might consider the tale as an exact parallel to the legend of Tannhäuser and the Mountain of Venus. Yet such a conclusion would be certainly erroneous; for the same story is told of the Teutonic forest women both in Central Europe and in Sweden, and it is found even in the Near East, in Persia and in India. We are therefore dealing, in all probability, not at all with a migratory legend but with independent growths out of a common basis, the well-known double aspect of all Spirits of the Wild. Nor can the so-called fairy-mistress theme be in any way considered as typically or exclusively Celtic. On the contrary, it is of necessity found wherever female Spirits of the Wild are believed in, which means, the larger part of the Old World and considerable territory in the New. Still less store can be laid by the peculiarly moralizing, edifying tone which the old tale will assume in different countries. For it stands to reason that wherever some ascetic religion or philosophy was in vogue the clerics were not slow in identifying the fairy-mistress with *Frau Welt*, that is, in mediaeval parlance, with the Devil in person.[62]

The migratory legend, it may be said after this long survey, appears to be about the most fascinating part of a fascinating subject. Unlike the fairy tale, the merry tale, and the animal tale, it cannot be said to have a common human basis, that is, a basis broad enough to recommend itself to all nations and all creeds indiscriminately. After all, the marvellous element of the fairy tale may enchant and does enchant all men, no matter of what colour their skin happens to be, and the well-known European types have successfully penetrated among the North American Indians. The merry tale again, with its broad humour which presupposes as a rule nothing but the most elementary human relationships, wins friends everywhere, and the best friends, strange to say, among people of a puritanical turn of mind. The animal tale in its simplest forms is found in every continent, and the coloured folk did not wait for the white man's coming to invent it. Hence an exchange of such stories is possible and presents no essential difficulties ; the only condition is that the animal forms in question be known. How different is it, at first sight, with migratory legends ! They arise in one place, growing out of a very definite condition, practice, or belief, often forming part of a very definite and highly orthodox religious system, and yet they are accepted elsewhere, sometimes eagerly accepted, sometimes incorporated into a different religious system. They must, so it seems, fulfil just one condition, and that is, they must be good stories, interesting, logically constructed, to the point and, quite important this, provided with a certain didactic element, a certain lesson to convey, however homely that may be. The legends passed in review, from the mysterious laugh of the Brahman boy to the treachery of Delilah and her descendant, the fair Tarpeia, and to the prototype of the Teiresias story, will amply prove this point, without my having to assume the position of the mediaeval preacher of *exempla*, who, after having related the story, believed it necessary and in keeping with his calling also to expound it.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND NOTES TO CHAPTER V

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[1] *Balor with the Evil Eye*, pp. 165 sqq.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 181 sqq.; cf. *Folk-Lore*, XXXIX, 108 sq.

[3] *A.R.*, IX, 342 sqq.

[4] *G.R.M.*, XV, 54–8.

[5] *Balor*, pp. 80 sqq.

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[7] Bibliography in K. Wehrhan, *Die Sage*, Leipzig, 1908, p. 50. Cf. also A. M. Killen, *L'Evolution de la légende du Juif Errant*, in *R.L.C.*, V (1925), pp. 1 sqq.

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[45] *B.H.*, XXVI, 305–11.

[46] *Ibid.*, XXX, 182–4.

[47] R. M. Dawkins, *Folk-Lore*, XXXV, 209–48.

[48] *R.C.*, XLIII, 124–31.

[49] Th. Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden, aus der arabischen Chronik des Tabarî*, Leyden, 1879, p. 83.

[50] *Andarz i Aturpat i Mahraspandan*, 87 ; cf. *Luke* XIV, 7–11.

[51] Aarne-Thompson, p. 120, No. 759.

[52] *A.R.*, VIII, 386.

[53] *A.J.S.L.L.*, XLI, 194–7.

[54] G. Neckel, *Die Ueberlieferungen vom Gotte Balder*, Dortmund, 1920.

[55] *M.S.G.V.*, XXVIII, 131–6.

[56] *H.B.V.*, XXVI, 24.

[57] *Rh.M.*, *N.F.* LXXVIII, 249–67.

[58] Cf. Bolte-Polívka, III, 201 sqq. ; Gering, *Islendzk Aeventyri*, II, 166 sqq.

[59] Appendix XVI.

[60] Ed. A. Långfors, Paris, 1912 (*Les classiques français du moyen âge*).

[61] *Die Braut von Rheinstein*, in Karl Simrock, *Rheinsagen aus dem Munde des Volks und deutscher Dichter*, Bonn, 1869, pp. 224–26.

[62] H. Güntert, in his recent study *Kundry* (Heidelberg, 1928), pp. 30 sqq. and 42 sqq., points to the story of the Temptation of Zarathuštra as the oldest known text and the ultimate source of all others.

CHAPTER VI

THE PROSE SAGA

TOWARD the middle of the last century an Englishman, Sir George C. Lewis, wrote two stately volumes in which he attempted to prove that our information about Roman history during the time of the kings and the early Republic is absolutely untrustworthy, for the simple reason that the oldest chroniclers must have drawn on memory, and human memory has its limits. Most, if not all, records having been destroyed when the city was taken by the Gauls, the oldest part of Roman history must be considered as fiction, not as history in the proper sense of the word.[1]

Lewis' arguments are faultless on the logical side, and they appear to have been accepted by at least one contemporary historian and specialist in Italian antiquities, Dr. Ettore Pais. Th. Mommsen, it is true, did not show himself much influenced by them, whatever his reasons. The difficulty had been realized long before Lewis' time by B. G. Niebuhr, who, mindful of the same shortcomings of the human memory so poignantly demonstrated by the English antiquarian, had recourse to the theory that the data in question had been handed down to the first historians by means of poetic compositions, and he went so far as to analyse the narrative of Livy's first books for the purpose of finding traces of such poetry. Looking for them, he of course found them. But his view has not been shared by many since his time.

The difficulty inherent in the problem lies of course in our inability to picture to ourselves a society, at bottom illiterate, which yet manages to hand down traditions, passing them on from generation to generation without fundamentally altering them in the process. Yet such societies have existed in historical times. There is no need to point out, in the first place, that writing is but one of the several mechanical devices that serve this useful purpose. The *quipu* system of the Peruvians is another probably quite as effective, to judge from the reports of the Spanish writers who have left us accounts of it. Memorizing is yet another.

It is of course perfectly true that the human memory, when untrained, is but an unreliable guide to the past. It is altogether different with the trained mind. It is on a group of trained minds that an illiterate society, which yet values culture and breeding, relies for a preservation of the records of the past. Some practical examples will show this clearly. The Maori of New Zealand have, or perhaps rather had, a professional class of men whose speciality was to memorize the traditions of this, that, or another of the families which constituted the Maori aristocracy. Those records, transmitted from father to son, went back to the seventeenth century, when the Maori people migrated to the double isle from some archipelago farther north. One cannot so easily picture a European having in his mind the vicissitudes of a noble family back to the days of Cromwell, with names and tree of descent substantially correct. The reason is that printed books, or even written manuscripts, make superfluous the Maori device, and the untrained mind, no matter how great its willingness, can never approach the degree of perfection and dependability of the professional sagaman.

On the other side of the globe we find an exact parallel to the Maori method of transmission in the form of the Icelandic saga. It would transcend the scope of this book were I to attempt a history of this literary form, which properly belongs to the domain of literary history, not of folk-lore.[2] Suffice it to say that the historical sagas were not written down before the thirteenth century, although the events they narrate belong to the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries. Yet in spite of the purely oral character of the transmission, the chronological blunders and mistakes of fact are small in number and not appreciably worse than those committed by many a mediaeval chronicler working according to a written tradition.

Still another example for this procedure is found in Mediaeval Ireland, especially if it is remembered that for Ireland the Middle Ages lasted down to the end of the eighteenth century. Side by side with the written tradition, a class of professional *savants* handed down the old sagas, many of which have survived orally the final extinction of that class and were current in the Western counties as late as the last century, when they were collected by folklorists such as W. Larminie, Jeremiah Curtin and Dr. Douglas Hyde. Nay, when after the Penal Laws literacy was fast disappearing from the island, the oral tradition as cultivated by the sagamen continued to flourish and was without question the most powerful factor in the survival of the Gaelic nation after the darkest century of its history.[3]

The Icelandic saga for some time was suspected of being, as a form of oral folk-lore, an importation from the Celtic countries, especially Ireland.[4] That view does not appear to be well-founded and has in more recent years been abandoned. What was chiefly responsible for this change of view was the discovery of genuine prose sagas among the peasantry of certain secluded valleys of Southern Norway.[5] The events transmitted in these sagas go back in part to the year 1600; the genealogical scheme is clearly visible and fairly prominent. Floating folk-lore motives have of course swelled the saga material, yet not appreciably more so than in some of the oldest Icelandic sagas.

Let us inquire next into the essential characteristics of saga lore. The saga is first of all a family saga ; it is chiefly concerned with genealogies and, to a certain extent with an ancestor cult (in the widest sense of that term). It follows from this proposition that the saga can flourish only where such a cult, in its noblest sense, can be said to exist, i.e. in societies essentially aristocratic. And here it must be said once and for all, the qualities which we connect with the terms of culture and breeding have nothing whatever to do with questions of literacy. The Incas of Peru, with their *quipu* system, the member of an ancient Maori family, the Icelandic Sturlunga family, who did not care to put their family records in writing until pretty late, had all vastly more breeding than the modern products of mass education turned out by complacent colleges and universities like so many pieces of a manufactured article. A man of breeding is a man who knows his genealogy, although the latter may not have been published in book-form. American society at the present day may be divided into two classes, the people who know their genealogy and those who do not. In the early history of the Republic the government was in the hands of the former class, now it is in those of the latter. The great Civil War marks the change.

Returning now to our starting-point, the Roman State, when we first encounter it in history, comes as close to the aristocratic model as any State can. To assume that such a society should have dispensed, in the absence of written records, with the family saga, to hand down the traditions of the senatorial families, is to assume the impossible. Whether there ever existed, in Ancient Rome, a regular prose saga of the Icelandic type, may of course justly be doubted. Yet it is inconceivable that the genealogies and high feats of the patrician nobility should all have been wiped out by the Gallic invasion, when the written records were destroyed, and that whatever is reported in the first ten books of Livy should be fiction and devoid of the historical elements with which we credit even an historical novel of the better type.

The prose saga is in its origins a family saga, that is, it is concerned with the genealogy of a given family, with the vicissitudes of each generation at least so far as it is represented by the oldest or most important branch, with public affairs only in so far as they concerned the family. But since in aristocratic societies history is made by just those families, it follows that a good portion of the family saga is genuine history. That a good deal of legendary lore should enter in, in connexion with family cults, family spirits, such as the banshee referred to above, corpse-ghost stories, the so-called second sight, etc., goes without saying.

These characteristics of the saga contents require of course a very definite form. Most important, from the point of view of the technique, are naturally the various mnemotechnical devices in the arrangement of the matter and, no doubt, in the text itself. These may vary with each ethnical group, but their presence in all of them may be taken for granted. The genealogical character requires a certain terseness, even dryness, of style, still visible in the genealogical introductions to most historical sagas of ancient Iceland. The same genealogical scheme makes it difficult to distinguish between the essential and the unessential; or rather, what is essential to the saga, the genealogical matter, is apt to be appear most unessential to the modern reader, which is certainly not the sagaman's fault. A last consequence is the purely biographical outlook on things which, though it goes hand in hand with a high degree of objectivity—the aristocratic mind does not indulge in mud-slinging—views all events from a certain angle imposed by the family tradition.

The genealogical saga is in folk-lore what biography is in literary history, though it is apt to be more discreet. But as the historical biography may become a biographical novel or romance, so the family saga will, in course of time, develop into a romantic saga, lacking the factual basis and becoming a vehicle for popular fancy. This process can be watched in ancient Iceland, where the saga form finally served to clothe the alien *útilegumannasaga* [6] and the fairy tale, often of Oriental, always of non-Icelandic origin. The process is a very gradual one and depends largely upon the introduction of fairy tale and merry tale motives. Some of the late Icelandic sagas read like a string of such motives, more or less arbitrarily connected. The literary value of sagas such as these is on the whole small. Their folk-lore value, on the other hand, is not inconsiderable. For many a theme these sagas furnish historical variants of the greatest importance for the diffusion of the theme.[7]

The chief reason, however, why the study of folk-lore cannot afford to neglect the saga lies in the problem of oral transmission, one of the central problems of our science. Stress has been laid, correctly no doubt, by M. Bédier and other scholars of our time, on the essential independability of oral tradition. Local legends, it is admitted, survive because the memory is assisted as it were by the presence of the local monument to which the legend is attached. In the absence of such monuments the survival of legendary lore has been denied. The saga clearly shows that human families with a family feeling and a family spirit, that is, aristocratic families, are just such monuments, except that, whilst the monument is dumb and can have no active share in the survival of the story, the family has a most vital interest in its story and will therefore foster the transmission as much as is in its power. Further, once the genealogical saga furnished the form and the method, that form and method could be used for materials not included under the head of family saga; and this fact no doubt explains the existence down to modern times of many a tradition otherwise inexplicable. M. Bédier, in his great work on the French epic, has singularly ignored this fertile source of oral tradition, most alive no doubt in a society as typically feudal and aristocratic as was that of Mediaeval France.

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[1] Sir George C. Lewis, *An Inquiry into the Credibility of the Early Roman History*, London, 1855; cf. also A. Schwegler, *Römische Geschichte* I (Tübingen, 1867), pp. 1 sqq. On the question of folk-memory cf. also J. L. Myres in *Folk-Lore*, XXXVII, 12, sqq.

[2] The standard treatise is found in E. Mogk, *Geschichte der Norwegisch-isländischen Literatur*, Strassburg, 1904, pp. 176 sqq. W. A. Craigie, *op. cit.*, pp. 110 sqq., gives a good bibliography of English translations of Icelandic sagas.

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CHAPTER VII

THE PROVERB

A PROVERB represents, in its essential form, some homely truth expressed in a concise and terse manner so as to recommend itself to a more or less extended circle. It may express the general truth literally, by a mere statement of fact, as do, for example, all hortative proverbs such as *Ora et labora, Fac et spera*, all proverbs implying an unfulfilled condition, as *If everything could be done twice, all would be wise*, and many others. Or it may express that truth hyperbolically, that is, assuming an extreme case, as for example *Where nothing is to be had the emperor loses his right, hodie rex, et cras morietur, Ubi bene ibi patria*, etc. Or the truth may be stated metaphorically: *A chaque oiseau son nid est beau, Tant va la cruche à l'eau qu'à la fin elle se casse, Aquila non capit muscas*, etc. It may, finally, have recourse to allegory, as in the German *Hochmut kommt vor dem Fall, Vorsicht ist die Mutter der Weisheit*, and many others.

The two essential features of the proverb are therefore its didacticism for the contents, and its conciseness for the form. That conciseness is often heightened by mnemotechnical devices such as rhyme or alliteration. Such devices are useful but not absolutely necessary. The didacticism, often quite obtrusive, marks the proverb as a creation of the popular genius and more than anything else establishes its kinship with fairy tale, animal tale, local and migratory legend. This didacticism no doubt is responsible for the fact that the proverb is pretty well ubiquitous, being found among non-European races no less than among the ancient Greeks and Romans, the mediaeval Irish and Icelanders [1] and the modern nations which are the support of Occidental civilization. Again the Maori of New Zealand may help to make this clear. Their proverbial lore, all handed down orally, as goes without saying, is truly astounding and easily puts in the shade the sum total of ancient proverbs that have come down to us from the Mediterranean civilization.

A proverb can no more than a tale be considered a mass product. On the contrary, each proverb was coined just once, in a given locality, at a given time, by one mind with some gnomic talent. Wherever a tradition is available to shed light on this genesis, it goes far to confirm its essential correctness. For example, in the Icelandic *Saga of Grettir the Strong* the hero is such a person, and on all possible occasions he gives forth a proverb. The sagaman is careful to add that it was remembered ever afterwards and that the saying passed into a proverb. Now whether the statement itself is historical, that is, whether Grettir did say those saws in just that form, must remain doubtful; for Grettir is manifestly one of those magnetic personages to whom all sorts of tales and adventures have been ascribed in the course of time. But it does show that the Icelanders of historical times were clearly aware of the genesis of proverbs, that they were first coined by one individual and then found favour with the rest of the community.[2] Nor can this genesis of proverbs be in any way considered an Icelandic peculiarity; on the contrary, we have evidence to the same effect among the Irish Celts, in Spain, Holland, Rumania, the Orient, and even in New Zealand.[3] If the form is simple enough, polygenesis may be considered possible; but a superficial survey of existing proverbs suffices to show that such can have been the case only in a relatively small minority. The form, the metaphor (whenever there is one), the individual turn of phrase which comes out in each, pretty definitely settle the individual origin of the saw. That a good deal of prudence in the inference is necessary goes without saying. The occurrence of the same idea or principle in various proverbs does not in itself indicate any relationship. For example, the idea embodied in the English *Where there is smoke there is fire* is expressed by the Italian proverb *Non si grida al lupo che non sia can bigio*, where the metaphor is so different, taken as it is from shepherd life, that no connexion between the two can reasonably be supposed. Another good example is furnished by the English *Birds of a feather flock together* and the French *Pour épouser un singe il faut être guenon* (she-monkey). Yet it would be difficult to separate the English from the Spanish *Todas las aves con sus pares*, which has a very close parallel in the Semitic.[4] Sometimes also the metaphor, though fairly close in a proverb hailing from a different linguistic group, is yet not close enough to admit of a definite inference, the less so because the train of ideas behind both proverbs must be considered fairly rudimentary. For example, the German *Viele Hunde sind des Hasen Tod* is matched by the Spanish *Si tantos halcones la garza combaten a fé que la maten.* As will be seen, the first is taken from the hare-hunt, the second from the (mediaeval) heron hunt with trained hawks. It is difficult, not to say impossible, with no other material on hand, to determine whether or not there is a relationship of some sort between the two proverbs. Similarly, the French *Etre comme une souris dans un fromage de Hollande* is unquestionably related to the Portuguese *Estar como rato no queijo*, whilst the French *Etre comme un rat en paille* and the German *In der Wolle sitzen* may be independent. The English *Where nothing is to be had the Emperor loses his right* is closely related to the German *Wo nichts ist, hat der Kaiser sein Recht verloren* and, the title being unknown in Mediaeval England, the saw is unquestionably a translation from the German. A similar relation must be supposed to exist between the English *Those that eat cherries with great persons shall have their eyes squirted out with the stones*, and the German *Mit grossen Herren ist nicht gut Kirschen essen*, though it is impossible to say whether the English or the German form can claim priority or whether both may not go back to some lost Middle Latin form. The latter assumption is probably true for the Irish *To throw a sprat to catch a salmon* and the German *Eine Wurst nach der Speckseite werfen.*

If however substantially the same proverb, both in content and form, is found in practically all the languages of Europe, diffusion by migration will account for this fact, unless the fundamental idea and metaphor is so simple that polygenesis may be seriously considered. Such is the case for the French *Tant va la cruche à l'eau qu'à la fin elle se casse*, which is matched by the Arabic *Not every time does the pitcher come home safe from the well.*[5] The same is probably true of the English *A burnt child dreads the fire*, which has very close Semitic analogues.[6] The Irish proverb *Though the day be long, night comes at last* has a German parallel in rhyme:

Scheint die Sonne noch so schön,
Einmal muss sie untergehn.

Again the idea behind the two is so simple that polygenesis is probably to be supposed to account for them. Similarly, the Irish *He that conquers himself conquers an enemy* finds its German parallel not only in the verse:

Sich selbst bekriegen ist der schönste Krieg,
Sich selbst besiegen ist der schönste Sieg,

but the idea occurs already in the Middle High German poets. Yet apart from such cases, which are probably not at all rare, each proverb type should admit, in theory, of a tracing of its history according to the geographic-historical method. In practice the problem is considerably more difficult than in the case of fairy tale or migratory legend, for the reason that the body of the average proverb furnishes but few indications, whilst the historical variants are not always satisfactory and for certain periods are apt to leave us in the lurch. Even so, certain results have been accomplished in this domain, although far more remains to be done.

In the first place, it is certain that the majority of all Latin proverbs are but translations from the Greek. Thus the above quoted *Ubi bene ibi patria* is but a free rendering of a passage of Euripides: *ἅπασα πατρὶς ἧ τις ἂν πράσσῃ καλῶς.* With didacticism rampant throughout the Middle Ages, the store of Latin proverbs survived the fall of the Empire and received even numerous additions, since Latin continued to be the language of moral instruction for centuries to come. How many of the new Latin proverbs were coined by clerics and how many are merely translations from the barbaric languages, is not known at present. What is again certain is that this Latin proverb literature exercised the most powerful influence upon the various vernacular tongues, and a vast majority of all French, German, English, and Scandinavian proverbs are visibly translations from the Latin. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when French influence predominated in Europe, French proverbs, or rather the French form of a given proverb, left its impress upon the proverb literature of the rest of Europe. How much the ancient Irish proverb owes to the Latin is not known at present, but it is probably a great deal. Similarly, there can be little doubt, after what we have seen above about the part played by the Western Celts in the transmission of tales, that the Irish must in turn have transmitted a considerable proportion of their proverb lore to the Icelanders. Icelandic literature, especially, is very rich in proverbs, though the amount of investigation bestowed upon this rather interesting field is disappointingly small. Above all, the Semitic Orient, and by no means only through the Bible, appears to have exercised a very considerable influence upon European proverb lore. For example, the well-known saying about silence being gold is derived from an Old Testament passage and has moreover continued to live to this day in the Semitic East.[7] But even a proverb such as *One must either be hammer or anvil*, made famous by Voltaire, has such a close parallel in an Arabic saying[8] that some relationship between Orient and Occident must be supposed.

If the coiners of proverbs were individual minds, the transmission, as in the case of the tales, lies with the rank and file of the population. Alterations and modifications are therefore bound to make themselves felt. However, whilst in the case of the tale those alterations are largely unintentional, but simply due to lapse of memory, the proverb is primarily subject to intentional modifications. To a few types of these we must now turn.

A certain number of known proverbs still betray their origin in a relatively high social sphere. They will be used rarely, if at all, by the common people and the peasants. The latter may be familiar with them or have heard them, yet for their own use they will inevitably prefer a debased form. This process comes out most clearly in the proverbs of the metaphorical type. The high-flown metaphor of the original proverb will be changed into one of a lower stamp, bordering, quite often, on outright vulgarity. Non-rhyming proverbs may be converted into others which rhyme; and in case the form is still too complex for the common mind, that complexity may be reduced and the proverb thus adapted to the lower social level in which it now gains currency. A good illustration is furnished by the English proverb *The higher the ape goes, the more he shows his tail* which, non-rhyming and fairly conservative in the treatment of the metaphor, is matched by a German form obviously coming from a lower social level, as is proved by the rhyme and the more vulgar form of the allegory: *Je höher dass der Affe steigt je mehr er seinen Hintern zeigt.* Similarly, the Latin *Hodie rex et cras morietur* on translation into popular German was furnished with the rhyme: *Heute rot, morgen tot.* Conversely, when there was a rhyme in a proverb or a proverbial expression, it was not easily given up. For example, the Old French saying *aller à la queue leu leu* (to go single file) has preserved the old and phonetically correct form for "wolf," *leu* $<$ *lupus*, whilst in Modern French that form has been replaced by the book-word *loup*.

Quite striking, in the study of the transformation of proverbs, are the popular additions made as a rule in an ironical sense which betrays a certain amount of diffidence with regard to the truth expressed; witness for example the German *Morgenstunde hat Gold im Munde* (*und Blei im A. .*). Yet such facetious additions are by no means always of popular stamp. In France I recently heard the following saw, about the learned origin and general truth of which there can be no doubt whatever: *Homo homini lupus, femina feminae lupior, clericus clerico lupissimus.*

This leads us to a brief discussion of the didacticism of proverbs. A proverb, as said before, expresses a general truth. In so far as it is not purely hortative, it may praise or recommend almost any virtue or attitude toward certain situations and problems. The idea at the back of all is of course the *ne quid nimis* which warns against all excesses, a maxim which ordinary common sense has in common with the *Nicomachian Ethics*. Without this general supposition one would have difficulty in understanding the curious fact that proverbs can be found to recommend one attitude, and others praising the precise opposite. This important fact throws light on the ethics inculcated by proverbs. What has been said about the ethical element of the fairy tale might be repeated here. As a matter of fact, it holds true for all popular fiction. The proverb strives for no high ideal, difficult of attainment, but merely voices the sum total of everyday experience which has become the common property of a social group and which is after all at the basis of the group morality in a work-a-day world, no matter what high religious or ethical system may be preached from the pulpit on Sundays. The English *Charity begins at home* and the French *Chacun pour soi, Dieu pour nous tous* may shock the moralist who looks for the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, yet, bearing again in mind the necessary premiss pointed out above, the *ne quid nimis*, one must admit that those proverbs are not as rudely selfish as they may sound but contain a truth which certain reformers of the revolutionary type had better bear in mind before they complain of the little applause which their generous ideas may find in the community.

In spite of the anonymity of proverbs and their generally popular origin, it is not to be supposed even for a moment that the popular and the literary could be isolated any more than this can be done in the other domains of oral folk-lore surveyed thus far. On the contrary, in the matter of proverb lore there has been a constant give and take between popular and learned tradition. The borrowings made from oral proverbs by writers of all ages and all countries require no special illustration. Shakespeare alone would furnish a whole proverb collection. Yet the reverse is no less true, and quite a number of proverbs owe their existence to some piece of literature. Suffice it to mention the famous *Parturient montes*, derived from an Aesopic fable. The current French saying *Revenons à nos moutons* goes back to the farce of the *Avocat Pathelin*. The German *Ein gut Gewissen ist ein sanftes Ruhekissen* is not thinkable without the jolly story told by Macrobius,[9] of how the Emperor Augustus fetched the pillow of a man who had just died after having been for years heavily in debt.

If the question be put how far the proverb, certainly a very ancient form of folk-lore, bears out the contentions of the Anthropological School, it must be admitted that a certain number of proverbs quite naturally reflect social and religious customs and beliefs long past, at least among the higher strata of civilized societies. For example the Latin *Rex hodie est et cras morietur* may perhaps go back to the institution of the temporary king slain after a brief reign. *Devil take the hindmost* is certainly the ultimate derivative of an ancient sacrificial custom for which we have a good deal of other evidence.[10] The rule *De mortuis nil nisi bonum* was certainly not evolved out of feelings of generosity or piety but out of fear of the dead man's vampire or his ghost. *In vino veritas* has been conjectured to point to an ancient mode of divination of which there are left traces in some of the oldest portions of the *Old Testament.*[11] The French *Enfans et sots* (*fous*) *sont devins* (*prophètes*) testifies to the high esteem in which idiots have always been held in rudimentary societies.

The proverb may develop into narrative, a process which comes out clearly in two intermediary forms, one of which has been recently examined in a German monograph, whilst the other is still a *terra incognita.*

The *Quotation Proverb,* as I translate the German term *Sagwort,*[12] contains a proverb or proverbial saying in the form of a quotation, together with an indication of the speaker and of the occasion on which it was uttered. For England it is attested as early as the eighth century. Bede relates how the Anglo-Saxon king Oswald of Northumbria, when beset on all sides and foreseeing his death, prayed for the souls of his men, whence they say in a proverb : '*Lord have mercy on their souls,' said Oswald, falling to the ground.*[13] As a rule, however, the common quotation proverb is of a far less edifying nature but almost always aims at some humorous effect. Such is clearly the case in the English *Good tools make good work, said the man as he flayed the mare with the gimlet,* and in the Low German *Ik will hoch h'rup, säd den Buren sin Sohn und keem an'n Galgen.* This may after all be a secondary development. What is certain is that the Quotation Proverb clearly points to the genesis of most proverbs as indicated above. Whether the indication as to where the proverb was first coined is correct, as it probably is in the episode of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Bede, is beside the point. It is sufficient to know that the folk appear to have had quite a distinct notion about the very definite origin of a given saying on a certain occasion which was remembered together with the saying itself.

The second class of proverb narratives comprises a certain type of story, of quite a varied character, purporting to explain the rise of a certain proverb or proverbial saying. In certain cases the truth of the assertion cannot be denied off-hand ; in others (no doubt the majority) we are simply dealing with aetiological tales designed to explain the origin of a proverb or proverbial expression no longer understood. A third group, finally, consists of deliberate inventions on the part of novelists and must therefore be classed as literature.

One of the oldest specimens occurs in the Old Testament. There was a Jewish maxim *The blind and the lame shall not come into the house*, a maxim based on the superstitious belief that those ' struck by God ' will bring misfortune. This proverbial expression was later connected with the story of the taking of Jerusalem by king David. That ancient Jebusite fortress was generally considered so impregnable that the saying was current that it could be defended by a garrison consisting of blind and lame men, a saying repeated by the besieged to David in derision. So David, when seizing the fortress, was said to have given orders to kill the lame and the blind, i.e. the Jebusites, thus turning the mockery on the besieged themselves. Hence, the story goes on, the proverb *The blind and the lame shall not come into the house.*[14]

The connexion of the proverbial expression with king David is thus spurious and the story nothing but an aetiological tale. Such need not be the case. Take for example the French expression *travailler pour le roi de Prusse*, which we know was coined by Voltaire after his experience at the court of Frederick II. The vicissitudes of the French author at Potsdam, his numerous fights, literary and legal, culminating in the composition of the diatribe against Maupertuis, his disgrace with his royal patron, and the famous episode at Frankfurt, would furnish a genuine proverb *novella* the historical truth of which cannot be doubted in the least.

The classical period of such proverb *novelle* was the Italian Renaissance, which saw the rise of whole collections of such stories. The first in time was the *De proverbiorum origine* of Antonio Cornazano of Piacenza, a collection of ten such stories in elegant Latin distichs, written about 1455 and published after the author's death, in 1503.[15] It was later on translated into Italian, under the title of *Proverbi in facetie*, and in this form attained a vastly greater popularity. The basic idea was however not due to Antonio Cornazano, since even before his time there circulated in Italy the anonymous verse *novella* entitled *la Istoria de Maria per Ravenna*,[16] which purports to explain the proverbial expression *Cercare Maria per Ravenna*, that is, to seek one's own discomfort or one's own shame. Toward the end of the fifteenth century, Francesco Bello, usually called the

Cieco da Ferrara, wrote some *novelle* in verse with the same purpose in view.[17] The climax was reached, in the following century, in the famous collection of similar stories compiled by Cinzio de' Fabrizi, which exercised a considerable influence on European letters.[18]

From what has been said about the genesis of many proverbs and proverbial sayings it is of course obvious that they are apt to become obscure as soon as the story of their first origin, i.e. their *novella*, is forgotten. Thus in Ireland, where a good deal of the old legendary material has been lost, we find a considerable number of such obscure sayings.

As has been pointed out above, this peculiar form, standing as it does on the border of folk-lore and literature, has so far received but scanty attention, which neglect is somewhat to be regretted, since the material in question is of considerable interest to the student both of folk-lore and of European literature in all its ramifications.

On the border-line of folk-lore and philology stands the multitude of proverbial expressions, comparisons, and current similes which help to swell the vocabulary of all civilized tongues. Striking parallelisms in various languages are quite common, but it is not always possible and never very easy to determine whether we are dealing with a heritage from the Latin, with spontaneous formations, or reciprocal borrowings by one tongue from another. It is fairly certain, for example, that the French *monts et merveilles* (which one promises, particularly on the eve of an election) and the German *goldene Berge* are both derived from the Latin *montes auri*. Yet in the case of the French *dormir comme un loir* and the Italian *dormire come un ghiro* we cannot know whether the comparison existed in the Latin (where the word *glis* exists but does not denote the same animal form) or whether (as is decidedly more probable) the comparison was coined in the Alpine regions and from there penetrated both into France and Italy.

Apart from the problem of migration and diffusion, quite a number of these expressions have become obscure either by the change of language or by a twisting of the text. For example the German *Die Katze im Sacke kaufen* (=' to buy a pig in a poke ') gives no real sense, since cats are not purchased at all as a rule. The original reading was doubtless not ' to buy a cat in a sack ', but ' to buy a hare in a sack', the hare turning out, of course, on closer inspection, to be a cat, to the dismay of the deceived purchaser.

A very important and most interesting type of proverb must last be mentioned: the legal formula which, in all illiterate societies, makes up the body of customary law. A considerable portion of the English Common Law to this day contains stores of such saws and formulas coming down from another age. Roman law, of course, originated so; and the practical working of such a system could have been observed down to very recent times among the Maori of New Zealand. There is little need to discuss this subject more fully, since it has been dealt with by the Father of Teutonic Folk-Lore himself, Jacob Grimm, in his *Rechtsaltertümer*.

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[1] Cf. *A.N.F.*, XXX (1914), pp. 61–111; 170–217; XXXII (1916), pp. 1–131; XXXIII (1917), pp. 58–63.

[2] Cf *A.N.F.*, XXX, 206 sqq.; XXXIII, 62 sq.; Maurer, *Isländische Volkssagen der Gegenwart*, Leipzig, 1860, pp. 60 sq., 121, 134, 141, 223.

[3] J. G. Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 24; R. H. Busk, *Patrañas*, or *Spanish Stories, Legendary and Traditional*, London, 1870, p. 162; J. W. Wolf, *Niederländische Sagen*, Leipzig, 1843, pp. 556, 641; P. Schullerus, *Rumänische Volksmärchen*, Hermannstadt, 1906, p. 642; E. J. W. Gibb, *The History of the Forty Vezirs*, London, 1886, pp. 200, 264; René Basset, *Mille et un contes, récits et légendes arabes*, Paris, 1924, I, 358; II, 292, 341; *Folk-Lore*, XXXVII, 260.

[4] M. Grünbaum, *Neue Beiträge zur semitischen Sagenkunde*, Leiden, 1893, p. 43.

[5] R. Socin, *Arabische Sprichwörter*, Tübingen, 1878, No. 159.

[6] Grünbaum, *op. cit.*, p. 42 sq.

[7] Socin, No. 180.

[8] Grünbaum, p. 41.

[9] *Sat.* II, 4.

[10] J. A. MacCulloch, *The Religion of the Ancient Celts*, Edinburgh, 1911, p. 261.

[11] Sir J. G. Frazer, *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament*, London, 1918, I, 426 sqq.

[12] Cf. Seiler, VIII, 1 sqq.

[13] Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, III. 12.

[14] 2 *Sam.* v. 6–8.

[15] Letterario Di Francia, *Novellistica* I, 497 sqq.

[16] *Ibid.*, pp. 513 sq.

[17] *Ibid.*, pp. 568 sqq. Cf. G. Rua, *Novelle del Mambriano del Cieco da Ferrara*, Torino, 1888.

[18] Aloyse Cinzio de' Fabrizii, *Libro della origine delle volgari proverbi*, Venice, 1526; cf. F. Flamini, *Il Cinquecento*, Milano, s.d., p. 368.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FOLK-SONG

THE folk-song is a song, i.e. a lyric poem with melody, which originated anonymously, among unlettered folk in times past and which remained in currency for a considerable time, as a rule for centuries. It is thus distinguished from the popular song, that is, a song of purely literary origin (though that origin may not be known in all its details), which has gained currency among unlettered folk, who naturally never worry about author and composer. In practice it is often difficult to draw the line between the two, and it stands to reason that many a song now considered a folk-song was originally but a popular song, but no literary tradition exists to explain by whom and on what occasion it was composed. In such a case the mere fact that it has retained its popularity suffices to class it as a folk-song. Thus the American *Kentucky Home*, though it is supposed to have originated in circles of a somewhat darker hue than is popular in certain sections of the country, is a genuine folk-song of both coloured and white people. *Home, Sweet Home*, *Love's Sweet Song*, and *Annie Laurie*, as well as *Auld Lang Syne*, are popular songs only. Should, however, the literary tradition connected with them be suddenly swept away by some disaster, whilst the songs themselves continue to live among unlettered folk, they would all soon be genuine folk-songs.

The distinction between folk-song and popular song is therefore accidental rather than inherent in the two *genres*. It is quite true, of course, that in the case of the popular song the literary tradition of a purely historical type is as a rule accompanied by a certain fixedness of form and contents, reinforced by frequent printed editions. That is likewise true of the genuine folk-song, at least in modern times when in connexion with the various nationalistic movements it has attained a greater popularity than it probably ever had in times past. Yet in those periods the transmission was purely oral, and hence the idea of a fixed form never occurred to any one.

Sometimes the case is even more complicated. A number of poets, especially in the eighteenth century, reworked old folk-songs, thus giving them a certain literary polish. In consequence, the new form, powerfully reinforced as it was by the printing press and besides, no doubt, of greater artistic value, little by little completely crowded out the old folk-song, which thus disappeared. The best English or rather Scottish example is of course Robert Burns.[1] In Germany Goethe's *Heidenröslein*,[2] based no doubt upon an old Alsatian folk-song, is now the standard version not only in Germany but even in Alsace. Sometimes the problem becomes so complex that it is well-nigh impossible, nowadays, to determine the exact share of the literary version of a certain song. Thus Bürger's famous *Lenore* is no doubt based upon an older ballad, yet the influence of his poem is visible on most modern variants of that theme.[3] The same may be said of the no less famous wedding song of Weber's *Freischütz*, the libretto of which attained a rare popularity in Germany and Austria just about a century ago.[4]

Mere anonymity, however, does not suffice to turn a popular song into a folk-song. As is well known, the English national anthem is quite anonymous, yet no one would class it as a folk-song. On the other hand, the *Marseillaise* was written by a definite author, Rouget de l'Isle, and yet it came near to being a genuine folk-song, at least so long as the idea behind it was not burned out, as happened soon enough. The genuine folk-song presupposes the complete absence of all officialdom, all influence exercised from above. The various national anthems are therefore literature and fall into the domain of the historian of literature. If as artistic creations they do not rank very high, so much the worse for them; folk-lore has to shake them off.

It is equally clear that a considerable number of songs considered now old folk-songs have in all probability a literary origin, of which no trace has been preserved. For this important fact must be borne in mind: If there is a choice between taking over what fairly suits the particular purpose in view and creating anew, the common man, now as always, will inevitably prefer the former alternative, following, as usual, the line of least resistance. Hence in periods of intense literary activity, literary productions will sink, from the classes for which they were intended in the first place, to the lower levels of the common people.[5] When the songs of the mediaeval troubadours had charmed the knights and ladies, and even after they had ceased to charm them, they still appealed to the peasants. In outlying districts of Ireland it is possible still to hear, from the lips of old crones, some of the highly literary poems composed by eighteenth-century bards such as Eugen O'Sullivan and Brian Merriman, though with what alterations had better be left untold.[6] It was the same in the Middle Ages. A story current in many places in Europe and ascribed to various poets, one of them Dante Alighieri himself, relates how the poet overheard a blacksmith sing one of his songs, in a horribly mutilated form. Whereupon in anger he upset the tools in the smithy. On being questioned by the astonished smith, he informed him that he was as particular about his productions as the smith was about his tools, and made him promise not to sing his songs unless he saw that he could do it correctly. That little anecdote leaves no doubt whatever about the constant inter-relationship between the upper and the lower strata and the wholesale borrowings of literary products from the former by the latter. In modern times the original folk-song has become a dead *genre* in Western Europe, for the simple reason that the literary men amply supply the need of all orders of modern society. In fact, they have done so for the last two hundred years.

The diffusion of folk-songs and popular songs is even more easy than the diffusion of tales; the melody gives it wings as it were, and even national and linguistic boundaries offer no unconquerable obstacle. Thus a German political song, composed about 1848 and having for hero the German democrat Hecker, one of those noble and disinterested spirits who then dreamt of the establishment of a German republic, is now common in Switzerland. The French song *Ma Normandie* with its original French melody can be heard in most parts of Northern Germany, in a translation which is doubtless of literary origin. More curious still, the well-known Dutch song of Piet Hein with the burden

> Piet Hein, Piet Hein,
> Zijn naam is klijn,
> Zijn daden zijn groot, zijn daden zijn groot,
> Hij heeft genomen de zilvervloot,

which goes back to the time when Holland was a Great Power, is found to this day in the former grand-duchy of Oldenburg.

Strictly speaking, one can conceive of the creation of a genuine folk-poetry only under certain very definite conditions; namely, when the popular speech is not used by the upper classes and is therefore no literary language at all, or when the literary productions have become so stilted and artificial that a special education is required to understand them. The former of these conditions obtained for English between the Norman Conquest and the time of Chaucer, and for the Romance Languages for the period between the fall of the Empire and the First Crusade. The latter held true for German in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, for French from the *Pléiade* poets to the Great Revolution. When there is a fair harmony between the two, the literature of the upper classes will always more or less affect the folk-song of the lower.

The folk-song is lyric in character, that is, above all, intensely subjective. It treats its theme with a great deal of seriousness; it is emphatic, sometimes childishly so. It lacks the finer shades of feeling, and its colours are usually somewhat harsh, as indeed they are in peasant craft. Its general temper is not gaiety, at least not gaiety of the light-hearted sort. Many folk-songs are in fact melodramatic; over others there hovers an atmosphere, if not of tragedy, at least of life's hardness and even bitterness. The folk-song is highly emotional, sometimes even sentimental; but the emotions are simple; there is no question of 'problems', of 'conflicts', let alone searching self-analysis or even introspection. A good number clearly betray, by the softness of their tones, feminine origin.

Whilst all this holds true, in a large measure, of the genuine folk-song, that is, of the folk-song whose possible literary provenance escapes us, it is not so true of the folk-songs which we have reason to suspect of having sunk from a higher social level, and is rarely true of the popular song. These two groups, precisely because of their literary origin, betray the tendencies, fads and fashions which haunted the literary world for which they were made in the first place, though, to be sure, here and there the sinking process was accompanied by a process of reworking and remodelling. It has, for example, been pointed out that a good number of popular songs current in nineteenth-century Germany are altogether different in tone from the traditional folk-song as well as from the lyric of the Romantic Movement; that they are sentimental, tender, idyllic and not at all free from what the French call *mièvrerie*. Upon closer examination they were found to be eighteenth-century literary poems, originally contemporaries of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the shepherd life of the Tuileries, fitting in well with Mozart's tunes and Goya's paintings. It is with these songs as with certain flowers cultivated in modern peasant gardens. As the Latin etymology of their vernacular names still shows, they were once highly prized for medicinal and other virtues. Medical science has finally rejected them; but they linger on among a population for which the very term 'science' is a meaningless word.

The form of the folk-song[7] is extremely simple, the four-line stanza being a favourite. Occasionally, there is a burden or refrain at the end of each stanza. The rhythm is as a rule correct, whilst the rhymes are often far from perfect. In some of the oldest specimens assonance is deemed sufficient. What is true of the text is even more so of the tune. In some cases this melody is probably not original at all but was taken from the tune of some literary composition. Later folk-songs would adopt the tune of an earlier one with which the singers were already familiar. Sometimes a popular burden was added to an artistic melody. In certain nineteenth-century German folk-songs eighteenth-century tunes, with Mozart in the lead, are clearly discernible. The English *Home, Sweet Home* will occur at once as a familiar example.

Most of the folk-songs now current in Europe are sung in a large number of variants, differing a good deal as one passes from one dialect to another. By a careful comparison of these variants it is as a rule possible to reconstruct the archetype of the song and at the same time to gain some insight into the date and place of its composition. The changes shown in some variants are quite striking, more so than in the case of the fairy tale. It is clear, of course, that lines containing expressions which were no longer understood were replaced by others; but since there was always the rhyme imposing checks upon the imagination, the modifications are sometimes rather ludicrous. Under these conditions one begins to understand Dante's indignation with the blacksmith.

The diffusion of folk-songs did not need the modern interchange of populations which we know did not exist in times past. That diffusion was in the hands of a rather small portion of the population, a portion not distinguished by sedentary habits. A good number of these migratory individuals, the *Fahrende*, as they are called in German, were professional minstrels of the more or less ambitious variety.[8] They did not die out with the Middle Ages; in fact, they are not dead yet, and there is hardly an exaggeration in the statement that to them is due most of the credit involved.

When in the nineteenth century an interest was shown in these folk-songs to which the upper classes had, in the previous generations, paid little heed, the various European countries were rather unequally represented. Generally speaking, Catholic Europe—with the exception of Ireland—has preserved more traditional songs than Protestant Europe, if one excepts again Sweden and Finland. Catholic Germany has, on the whole, furnished more and better variants than Protestant Germany. One may question, however, whether the Reformation itself was responsible for the disappearance of the folk-song in certain regions. In eighteenth-century England and Scotland, for example, the folk-song was still flourishing, as is sufficiently shown by the work of Burns and numberless allusions in Walter Scott. It had thus survived the Cromwellian terror and the Kirk. What seems to have killed it in the British Isles is the aggravated type of Nonconformity which sprang up in the eighteenth century and which reached its climax in the nineteenth, and no doubt also the rapidly developing industrialism with its shifting of populations from the country to the cities.

We must next take up the various categories of folk-songs which have been known, with more or less completeness, to exist in historical times. The oldest *genre* is unquestionably the love song, which, as is well known, is not at all peculiar to man but is shared with all higher animals. With communal life well developed, it is but natural that certain patterns should arise which would in turn dominate this type of song so as to create certain very definite sub-types. It is to these that we shall now turn.

One of the oldest—if not the oldest—of all sub-types is the Song of the Night Visit (*serenata*),[9] best known, perhaps, from Burns's poem

> O Lassie, art thou sleeping yet,
> Or art thou walking, I would wit ?
> For Love has bound me hand and feet,
> And I would fain be in, jo.

The Scottish poet of course merely reworked a peasant *serenata* still current in eighteenth-century Scotland, no doubt to the dismay of churchpeople. The type is well known all over Europe and cannot be separated from the practice of the night visit, the *kiligang*. This practice, still in vogue in the Swiss and Tyrolese Alps, implies the visit of the lover, by night, to the house of the beloved. The Church has frowned upon the custom as it has frowned upon the songs, with little success. Even in seventeenth-century Spain, where the influence of the clergy is known to have been strong, it flourished, and not only among the lower and peasant classes. Both practice and song are clearly survivals, ultimately derived from a state of society, pre-Aryan, no doubt, when husband and wife did not live together, but when the latter remained with her kinsfolk and only admitted the husband at certain times, a state well known from many a savage or barbaric society of our own day. While the age of individual songs may be historically determined, the sub-types, the patterns, are thus undoubtedly prehistoric. From such songs of the night visit, current in Southern France, developed the art type of the mediaeval *serenata* as cultivated by the troubadours, in much the same fashion as Burns's poem quoted above grew out of the Scottish peasant songs of his time.

A close pendant to the foregoing sub-type is the *Alba* or *Aubade*,[10] the farewell song of the lover at dawn, sometimes a dialogue between man and woman. Equally ancient, it presupposes the same social condition, the same relations between the sexes. When the lyric of the Provençal art schools took up the old theme, a new content had to be given to the old form; that content was the idea of courtly, that is, illicit, love. The man became the lady's lover, her poet, and the enemies from whom he had to flee were no longer the woman's kinsfolk but her old and jealous husband. Even so, the older and popular form was not entirely crowded out by the younger and artistic one; witness the most famous *alba* of English literature, the parting of Romeo from Juliet:

> Wilt thou be gone? it is not yet near day!
> It was the nightingale, and not the lark,
> That pierced the fearful hollow of thine ear;
> Nightly she sings on yond pomegranate tree!
> Believe me, love, it was the nightingale.

Out of much the same circle arose a third sub-type, the *pastourelle*,[11] which is the first for which we have definite evidence in antiquity. The art of Theocritus and Bion is of course largely Alexandrian and quite remote from the folk-song. Yet at bottom they did only what the mediaeval troubadours were to do centuries later; they reworked and polished primitive rustic models. Nor can it be accidental that the earliest and one of the finest examples of the Italian *pastourelle*, the famous *Rosa fresca*, hails from the same region: Sicily. Whether this jewel of ancient Italian poetry is genuinely popular must in justice be doubted; yet the general pattern unquestionably was so. The *pastourelle* is fundamentally the wooing of the male in the open field and at day time. The flocks of sheep and the jingling of their bells are accessories which will become the more prominent the more a given specimen is removed from the folk. The passion, especially when there is dialogue, comes out clearly even in the late drawing-room pieces of Bion and the probably not purely popular *Rosa fresca*. It certainly must have been rather stronger than weaker in the rustic originals now lost. In Mediaeval France, or rather in Provence, the lifting of this sub-type into the courtly sphere entailed an ever increasing process of standardization with an introduction of the feudal scheme of things which was certainly absent in the popular originals. A knight will come riding alone on the high road and see a shepherdess in the field near-by. He will proceed with his proposition, which will be indignantly rejected by the girl. If he persists, the shepherd, husband or betrothed of the girl, will come along and drive him off with threats. A different outcome, more favourable to the knight, obtains only in relatively few cases. This *courtois* form has quite crowded out, in Modern France, the older and more popular type, yet the *genre* is not dead in France even to-day, and René Bazin, in his novel *La Terre qui meurt* refers to a genuine *pastourelle* as still sung at dances:

Quand j'étais une fille
Petite à la maison,
M'en fus à la fontaine
Pour cueillir du cresson.

A popular form may be behind the *chansons de la croisade*,[12] though the literary and artistic forms again gained the upper hand in a comparatively short period. The spirit of the former appears to have lingered on, however, and several of the later poems, speaking, as the Germans put it, *von Scheiden und Meiden und Wiedersehn*, parting songs, that is, have their prototype in such crusaders' songs. On the whole it must be said that in proportion as the individual note increases the genuine folk origin of a song becomes suspect. The lovely Middle High German

Dû bist mîn, ich bin dîn:
des solt dû gewis sîn.
dû bist beslozzen
in mînem herzen,
verlorn ist daz sluzzelîn;
dû muost immer dar inne sîn,

not at all rare in popular variants, is certainly not popular at all, but one of those songs which sank from a higher level to that of the masses. That eternal quality of all artistic lyric, *préciosité*, gives away many a song seemingly popular but really not so.

Of genuinely popular origin is the dancing song, which often enough, especially in its modern survivals, is also a love lyric. A number of art forms still betray such an origin by their name, the most famous and best known being no doubt the *ballata* of Southern Europe. The literary *ballata*[13] is derived from a popular one, that is, a song of a very definite composition sung to a group dance. In spite of the Latin name, the dance as well as the song are probably pre-Roman and belong to the native populations of the West Mediterranean. The same is true of the Italian *strambotto*, a lyric form so famous during the Italian Renaissance, but of quite humble origin. In Modern Europe the Bavarian *Schnadahüpfl* is an interesting survival and at the same time a good illustration of another element important in this connexion : improvisation.

The *Schnadahüpfl* is a four-line stanza with the rhyme scheme a : b : d : b, each line consisting of four stresses with a caesura or pause between the second and the third. Thus, the pattern fixed, as it were, improvisation is of the easiest and indeed of the most common occurrence. Most of these are naturally short-lived, and only the best among them will survive. Individual authorship is as a rule quickly forgotten and plays no rôle whatever, though of course there exist professional makers of *Schnadahüpfla*. Improvisation of this type will in the last analysis account for the folk-songs for which literary models cannot be supposed, for the simple reason that there was no such thing as literature.

One of the oldest types of popular poetry is the Complaint, which has its origin in the funeral ceremonies well attested even in the lowest known forms of social organization. There can be little doubt that the idea underneath is the fear of the dead; hence the maxim *De mortuis nil nisi bonum*. The Complaint acted on this principle, as does the modern funeral oration, and it turns out to be a funeral eulogy of the deceased. The Gaelic *coronach* and the Corsican *ballata* are European survivals of the ancient custom, which is certainly to be regarded as one of the chief roots of all epic poetry. As a purely lyric form it has left traces in the oldest literature of Modern Europe, the Old Provençal. The literary complaint is of course but a derivative of the old funeral lament.

The complaint is often enough the product of improvisation, although the improvisers are usually professionals; witness the Corsican *voceratrici*. Women were, no doubt because of the preponderance of the purely imaginative element noticeable in them, picked out for such purposes. This leads us to another type of popular poetry clearly associated with women, the weaving song and the song of the water-carrying women.

The weaving song [14] is in the first place a work-song, that is, a song the rhythm of which is meant to accompany the rhythm of a given occupation and which will occupy us further on. It was sung by the women sitting before the loom in a period when spinning and weaving were household matters and were entirely incumbent upon the wives, daughters and female servants of the house. Its antiquity is well attested by ancient writers, but the specimens that have come down to us are mediaeval. The weaving song represents the heroine as pregnant and abandoned by her husband or lover. The general tone of the song is therefore gloomy and sad. This fact and the strange theme call for some explanation.

In an interesting paper Mr. Lewis [15] attempted, a few years ago, to explain both by some influence exercised upon the weaving song by the apocryphal gospels where Mary in the same condition is described as weaving a temple curtain in the temple of Jerusalem. This theory, however ingenious, sins chiefly by trying to explain *ignotum per ignotius*; for we have no explanation whatever for the strange fiction of the apocryphals, so contrary to Jewish notions and traditions concerning the third Temple. Both the weaving song and that pseudo-Christian (and pseudo-Jewish) tradition have, however, a common root in prehistoric human organization, the husband cohabiting with his wife and then leaving her to dwell with his own people whilst she remains with her kinsfolk. This situation, rapidly disappearing in Aryan times, continued as a survival in certain religious rites, the *ἱερὸς γάμος*, with the accompanying cult-legends, of Persephone spinning or weaving in her cave and the birth of the young god Zagreus. It also survived in the Near East, where the priestesses of certain sanctuaries, not famous for their high morality in sexual matters, were engaged in weaving the *peplos* of the divinity, which, when transferred to Judaism, was turned into the temple curtain. There is thus a parallel development in both Orient and Occident, the former ending with the account of the apocryphals, the latter with the mediaeval weaving song.

Somewhat akin in theme to the weaving song is the song of the water-carrying women.[16] Again we are dealing with what is clearly and unmistakably a work-song. In primitive communities the task of fetching water from the village well fell, and in the Orient still falls, upon the female side of the household. The village wells were therefore (and in the East still are) the most appropriate meeting place for the two sexes, and in the Old Testament we actually find a new-comer stopping at the well to wait for the girls of the community to come, so that he may gather from them the information he wants. If then the girl in the well-song represents herself as pregnant and abandoned by her faithless lover, this fiction is merely a replica of many a like occurrence of a more factual nature. At all events, the ancient writers do not leave us in the slightest doubt that abductions and kidnappings of women from the well were rather common when the Mediterranean world was still young.

Still another type of work-song, equally the product of women, is represented by the *cantilenae molares*,[17] as they are called by the mediaeval writers. The oldest and most primitive sort of mill, going back into the stone age, is the hand quern in which the women had to grind the grain by crushing it with a sort of pestle. Where the quern was larger and sufficient for several households or the whole community, the work was done by bands of women who accompanied their labour with songs having, like the foregoing, reference to the type of their work. Thus the ancient women sang of a certain king Pittakos who also had to grind, we do not know why. Other *ἐπιμύλιοι ᾠδαί* are connected with the name of Kyzikos, a legendary king of Mysia to whose name various tales about a golden age were attached. This golden age came to a sudden end by a hostile invasion from the sea, and the women, while turning the mill, recalled in elegiac tones the past splendour. North European analogues are not wanting. The Eddic legend of Menja and Fenja, the two giantesses forced by King Froði, another king of the golden age, to grind for him wealth and happiness, and who bring about his destruction in the end, has no other origin. The famous Song of Grotti originated as a grinding song, sung by women ; hence the significant fact that two women, the giantesses, are in the centre of the action and that with their activity is connected the bloom of Froði's realm and its final downfall.

Essentially a woman's song is the type of the ill-matched woman,[18] familiar to English readers, thanks to Burns's famous poem :

What can a young lassie, what shall a young lassie,
  What can a young lassie do wi' an auld man ?
Bad luck on the penny that tempted my minnie
  To sell her poor Jenny for siller an' lan' !

He's always compleenin' frae mornin' to e'enin',
  He hosts and he hirples the weary day long ;
He's doyl't and he's dozin', his bluid it is frozen,
  O, dreary's the night wi' a crazy auld man !

He hums and he hankers, he frets and he cankers,
  I never can please him, do a' that I can ;
He's peevish and jealous of a' the young fellows ;
  O, dool on the day I met wi' an auld man !

My auld auntie Katie upon me takes pity,
  I'll do my endeavour and follow her plan!
I'll cross him and wrack him, until I heart-break him,
  And then his auld brass will buy me a new pen.

One might also compare the Irish song:

An old man he courted me, fond and lovingly,
An old man he courted me, believe me if you can,
An old man he courted me, to my sorrow he married me:
So, maids, never while you live wed an old man.

Whatever the psychological basis underneath this curious type, it is of popular origin, though in the Middle Ages it developed into a well-defined literary *genre* of which a good number of specimens have been preserved both in Provençal and French. It is likely that the type originated in women's festivals and rites, from which men were strictly excluded, and which appear to have lingered down into the Middle Ages from prehistoric and ancient times.

Somewhat related to the foregoing form, though bordering already on the popular ballad, is a type of song, relating what might be called a 'foiled tryst'. I can do no better than quote a German specimen which runs as follows:

Es het ein biderman ein Weib,
jr tück wollt sie nit han.
Das macht jr grader stolzer leib,
dass sie bat iren man,
vnd dass er führ ins hew,
nach grumat in das gew.

In this form the poem is evidently of the sixteenth century, The text being obscured by many words since become obsolete, the poet Langbein, in the eighteenth century, remodelled it; and it is in this form that the song is still sung in the Rhenish country (Langbein himself was an Alsatian). In this improved form the poem presents the following text [19]:

Ein ehrsamer Graukopf, ein Landmann, erkor
Die Krone des Dorfs sich zur Frau;
Doch zog sie bald einen Soldaten ihm vor,
Und drang in den Alten einst schlau,
Er sollte doch fahren ins Heu,
Er sollte doch fahren ins. . . .
Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! Heidideldei,
Juchhei, tralalei!
Er sollte doch fahren ins Heu.

The action in the two forms is of course identical; the farmer conceives a suspicion and feigns to follow his wife's suggestion, but hides somewhere in the house. The soldier, a good-looking dragoon, is not long in coming; but at the critical moment the husband leaves his hiding-place to surprise the couple; to quote Langbein's last stanza:

> Potz Donner und Hagel! und wär ich auch weit
> Gefahren ins Heu oder Gras,
> Verbät ich, zum Henker! doch während der Zeit
> Mir solchen verwetterten Spass!
> Da fahre der Teufel ins Heu,
> Da fahre der Teufel ins . . .
> Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! Heidideldei,
> Juchhei, tralalei:
> Da fahre der Teufel ins Heu!

Women's songs are (or, more prudently, perhaps, *were*) the cradle songs. It is quite likely that they developed out of the burden or refrain, or merely out of a humming melody, somewhat akin to the French plough song, and that most of the texts we possess are literature rather than folk-lore. A certain share must no doubt also be given to pure improvisation. Any thorough investigation of this type encounters a serious obstacle in the scantiness of the materials. The present writer has heard it pronounced that antiquity lacked the cradle song. Antiquity, on the strength of the same *argumentum e silentio*, would have lacked most types of the folk-song discussed so far. As a matter of fact, we have a scrap of a Latin cradle-song and references to Greek ones, all of which have come down to us largely by sheer good luck. What is then unjustified in this connexion is precisely such an argument. For with the well-known division of the Greek household into the masculine and the feminine side, the latter condemned to silence, one can hardly expect a different state of affairs.

From women's songs, essentially work-songs, as we have seen, to the work-songs of men is an easy transition. The German scholar K. Bücher,[20] toward the end of the last century, saw in them the most primitive type of human song. Such a theory is not without exaggeration; Love, fortunately, is considerably older than Work. But it is safe to say that the work-song goes back to the very beginnings of organized work. The ancient rowers who managed their oars according to the rhythm of a flute-player are of course a familiar example. The well-known song said to have been composed by King Cnut to the music of the splashing oars in the water and the distant choir of the monks, a song usually and quite wrongly classed as a 'ballad', was simply a work-song. Songs or, more correctly, 'calls' used to be heard from the lips of the Mississippi boatmen when navigation on that river was still in its bloom; and the greatest of American humorists took his pseudonym from such a 'call'. Many of the sailors' songs all over the world have such an origin; and in the Orient, as well as in the former Slave States, the building of houses is accompanied by the songs of the workmen. Special songs were sung during the work of the hemp-gathering in Normandy; and a similar phenomenon can be observed in the tobacco plantations of Virginia and Maryland, where practically all the workers, both men and women, are of course coloured folk. There can be little doubt that trade songs in general have a similar origin. Washer-women—before washing was done by machines—had similar songs, and Emile Zola picked up one of them, which he utilizes in one of his novels:

Pan, pan ! Margot au lavoir,
Pan, pan ! à coup de battoir,
Pan, pan ! va laver son cœur,
Pan, pan ! tout noir de douleur.

However, even the ghostly laundresses of the French countryside, of whom mention has been made in a previous chapter, are often expressly said to accompany their work by songs of the same nature. Thus the work-song is considered so ingrained in human nature that it survives death.

A work-song in part, and in part a song of triumph, sung to give vent to feelings of joy, is the well-known song of *Num.* xxi. 17–18:

Spring up, O well. Sing ye unto it;
The well which the princes digged,
Which the nobles of the people delved,
With the sceptre and with their staves.

Doubtless one of the oldest portions of the Old Testament, it yet has parallels in modern Arabic, where songs of this general type are sung to accompany dances, a circumstance which brings these songs close to the border-line of work-songs and ritual songs.

Very old, certainly considerably older than the work-songs, is a certain group of songs which are usually rather discreetly omitted in treatises dealing with the general subject, and which might be called ritual songs. It is difficult to distinguish them in principle from the dancing songs. In practice the line can be drawn easily thanks to the significant fact that in European society the dance survives in only one function, the erotic one, whilst the ritual dance has almost completely disappeared. The ritual song was originally accompanied by the ritual dance, or rather, it accompanied the latter, since the dance was, as it still is in many a savage society, the most important feature. The ritual song survives only in the form of the wedding song, now usually sung, in rural districts of France, Germany, Sweden, and Eastern Europe, when the newly-wed couple enters its new home. Formerly a rustic wedding was a far more complicated affair, and the ceremonial song played a proportionately larger part. The intrusion of the church wedding and the opposition of the clergy spelled its ruin.

Of the true character of the old wedding song, the folk-song incorporated in the libretto of Weber's *Freischütz* can give but a very imperfect idea. It was, from the modern view-point, altogether coarse, and allusions to the fertility of the young couple no doubt abounded, as they still abound in Russian and Little Russian specimens. It must be remembered, of course, that what appears obscene to us, city-bred people, does not necessarily appear so to a rustic population and not at all so to a primitive society.

Ritual songs were customary during the scattering of the seed. Again the idea of fertility was uppermost in man's mind, and the songs were meant to stimulate the growth of the new vegetation. Of some of the rites practised more will be said anon; but it must be obvious to every one that the Roman Saturnalia and the Dutch *kermis* have no other origin. What that *kermis* was like as late as the nineteenth century can be seen quite easily from the accounts of travellers. What has largely perished is the bulk of the old Dutch *kermis* songs; their "immorality" was considered too crude and shocking. Of a somewhat similar character were the Mediaeval English Christmas songs, described as "obscene" by the chroniclers and the ecclesiastical authorities, and the reason becomes clear if we remember that Christmas was and partly still is the season for a variety of fertility rites.[21]

The last, but no doubt one of the very best, of these survivals of ritual songs has been noted in connexion with the Irish wake. So far it has not, unfortunately, received the attention it deserves. Obscene rites, accompanied by songs, in connexion with funerals, have been noted elsewhere, but no satisfactory explanation has been given. Personally, I should think it difficult to separate this set of rites from the ritual and the songs practised at seed-time. The idea expressed by St. Paul:

> It is sown in corruption ; It is raised in incorruption : It is sown in dishonour ; it is raised in glory : it is sown in weakness ; it is raised in power . . .

is far older than Christianity and can be traced to Ancient Egypt. It would occur, no doubt, spontaneously to any agricultural population; and it is certainly a noteworthy fact that all the imagery attached to the ideas of death and resuscitation has been taken from farm-life and agriculture. A large-scale transfer of sowing rites and sowing songs appears to have taken place in Ireland; and rites and songs that fell into disuse when primitive magic fell into decay appear to have taken refuge in the ceremonies of the wake and, fortified there as in a fortress, to have resisted all attacks made upon them by the Church and the *Aufklärung*.

A ritual origin seems to obtain also for the drinking song or the *brindisi*, as the Italians call it (from the German toast *bring dirs*). Drinking bouts and debauches are to this day connected with the rites of the natural religions, especially with those from which women are excluded. To be sure, the type had a brilliant history, thanks to the organizations of *vagantes* and students, to say nothing of the mediaeval trades unions with their quaint rites and quainter songs. Yet it is precisely in the latter that the ritual origin is still clearly noticeable.

The drinking song may be, and often is, what is called a cumulative song, though it is well to bear in mind that the cumulative song need not be a drinking song. By the term 'cumulative song' we mean one of those compositions to which more and more stanzas may be added by subsequent singers, usually by improvisation, and these additional stanzas swell the song sometimes in proportions undreamt of by the original singer or author. The ancient Greeks had such a type of which one specimen, undoubtedly a drinking song, has been handed down to us, thanks to a scholiast. I refer to the Athenian song of Harmodios and Aristogeiton [22]:

In a myrtle bough shall my sword be hid,
So Harmodios and Aristogeiton did
The day that they struck the tyrant down
And made this Athens a freeman's town.

Dearest Harmodios, never dead,
But in Islands of Blessed Men now, 'tis said,
Where is Achilles, the great of speed,
And Tydeus' son, goodly Diomede.

In a myrtle bough shall my sword be hid,
So Harmodios and Aristogeiton did
When on the day of the offering
They slew Hipparchos, the tyrant king.

Ever their fame shall be and shall brighten,
Dearest Harmodios and Aristogeiton!
Because it was they put the tyrant down,
And made this Athens a freeman's town.

Nor are examples lacking in mediaeval and modern times. There is, for instance, the Central and East European song of the *Birds' Wedding.*[23] A bird couple celebrates its wedding, and each bird has a definite function in the ceremonial. It goes without saying that the song can be prolonged almost *ad infinitum.* A somewhat similar composition was current in eighteenth-century America, that is, in the Atlantic States, and is now sung only in the wilderness of the Appalachian Mountains and in remote parts of New England:

Says the robin as he flew,
When I was a young man I choosed two.
If one didn't love me the other one would,
And don't you think my notion's good?

Hoots! says the owl with her head so white,
A lonesome day and a lonesome night.
Thought I heard some pretty girl say,
She'd court all night and sleep next day.

Again it will be seen that as many stanzas can be composed as there are birds known by the singer. In Northern Germany there exists a song of the *Minister's Cow.*[24] The cow of a Lutheran divine has departed this life, and the song goes on to relate how each part of the poor animal is being utilized in the village community, whilst her soul, inasmuch as she was a minister's cow, goes, of course, straight to Paradise.

Other examples of cumulative songs are found in the rather numerous satires made by one village community against the other, a custom known from Central Europe to Spain. The folly of the villagers of the rival community is illustrated in each stanza by a new trick played upon, or a new stupidity carried out by, the village mayor, the town-clerk, the miller, the village baker, and so on *ad infinitum.* Or a song of this character will be composed by the community at the expense of its profane and spiritual advisers, from the mayor and town-clerk to the parish priest or the minister.[25] There have been instances where the satire was so virulent that the authorities had to stop the songs by fines and imprisonments imposed upon the singers.

The famous *Weavers' Song* of the Silesians in 1849 is a case in point, though it marks already the line which separates the folk-song from the political song.

This and the religious folk-song I here omit, chiefly because both are so deep-rooted in historical tradition that their treatment in a book like the present one would necessarily fall somewhat short of scientific accuracy. Suffice it to say that in both forms individual, not communal, authorship is certain. The Cavalier and Puritan ballads of the English Revolution could no more be thought the outcome of communal activity than the *Marseillaise*, about the authorship of which there exists, fortunately, no doubt whatever, no matter what may be said about the origin of its glorious melody. The same observation holds for the religious folk-song. It may be safely admitted that, like the political song, it can flourish only in periods of great religious fervour such as the Franciscan movement in thirteenth-century Italy and Protestantism in the Germany of the Thirty Years War.[26] Yet in the latter case virtually all the authors of Protestant hymns are known, together with the particular circumstances which gave rise to each individual poem. All of which has not in the least prevented these hymns (a few of which are indeed masterpieces even from the artistic view-point) from becoming genuine folk-songs. It may be worth adding the well-known fact that comparatively few religious songs can boast of original melodies. The very quickness with which they came into being, as a rule among strata to which the very word originality meant little or nothing, brought it about that melodies of popular songs, street-songs, and even snatches of comic operas were without much hesitation used for hymn-tunes, a fact which applies with equal force to the Franciscan hymns of Mediaeval Italy and to the Nonconformist hymns of the great eighteenth-century revival.

One final word about the composition of folk-songs, the more necessary because in the following chapter the matter will again require our attention. The folk-song is of individual authorship in the sense that it was first composed by one individual, sometimes a known literary figure, sometimes a man of the people whose name has remained obscure. Its composition may be but is not necessarily due to improvisation. The folk-song is communal in the sense that its text is never quite fixed and that alterations, modifications and additions can be practised freely. It is communal also in the sense that a given song, especially the cumulative song, may in fact have a dozen or more authors, each being responsible for a stanza or two.

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[25] For a good example of this type of song, at the expense of the Silesian town of Neurode, cf. J. Bolte, *Z.V.V.*, XXXV, 36 sq.

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CHAPTER IX

THE POPULAR BALLAD

THE popular ballad is a simple narrative poem relating epic events as seen through the medium of a lyrical temperament, popular in origin or by transmission, and fitted for oral circulation. The word ballad, which is of Latin etymology, has often been thought to imply that ballads were sung to accompany dances. Unfortunately, the etymology of the name allows of no such conclusion, for it was applied to this *genre* at a comparatively late date, probably some time during the eighteenth century, after having previously designated a genuine dance-song. For it would be wrong to confuse the form of literature or oral folk-lore now denoted by the English word *ballad* with the purely lyrical type (originally really a dance-song) called *ballata* in Provençal and Italian. The two have nothing in common, except that, generally at a late date and in strictly limited areas, the former did occasionally serve to accompany dances, which fact is no doubt chiefly responsible for the transfer of the name. It certainly is significant that the Scandinavians use instead the term *folkevisor*, which means merely ' folk-songs ' or ' folk-melodies ', whilst the Spaniards and French designate the type by the word *romance* (of masculine gender), which originally simply designated any composition written in the vernacular as opposed to Latin. The German word *Ballade* is merely an eighteenth-century borrowing from the English.

The ballad must not be confused either with the epic lay (the German *Lied*) or with the Breton *lay* (of a Celtic etymology). The epic lay is a purely epic narrative and hence entirely objective, as objective as, say, the *Iliad*, though of course much shorter and less ornate.[1] The Old High German *Hildebrandslied* is a good example. The Breton lay is likewise a short and purely epic narrative, of literary origin, but embodying considerably more folk-lore elements than the epic lay.[2] The epic lay stands at the beginning of the epic development, having probably grown out of the funeral lament. Its contents may be reworked, enlarged and ornamented in the great epic (the French *épopée*) ; but the epic cannot be considered as consisting of epic lays stitched together. The technique of epic lay and *épopée* is too fundamentally different. The popular ballad stands at the end of the epic development, when the great epic begins to disintegrate. To prove this important fact and thereby to explode the theory which saw in the ballads the stuff which the great epics were made of, has been the work of the Catalan scholar Milá y Fontanals.[3]

A considerable portion of the existing ballads are unthinkable without the great epic as a predecessor. Thus many of the Danish ballads are derived from the disintegrating cycle of the Nibelungs, which migrated from Germany to Denmark. The Spanish Cid ballads and the ballads of the *Infantes de Lara* presuppose the *Poema de Mío Cid* and the several *Cantares de los Infantes de Lara*, and the Modern Greek ballads about Digenes Akritas owe their origin to the great Byzantine epic.[4]

This does not mean, of course, that *every* individual ballad must go back to some great epic. It would be absurd to reconstruct an Anglo-Saxon *épopée* on Robin Hood on the strength of the ballads centring in that hero. Once the type was created it was of course possible to adapt any subject that was at all suitable to ballad treatment. Nor is it by any means safe to assert that the West European ballad would not exist as a type without the great epics that went before. There is a good deal to be said on this subject. Further, in Eastern Europe, that is in Finland[5] and Russia,[6] either there exists no epic at all—the *Song of Igor* is too isolated a specimen to be used to advantage and the Finnish *Kalevala* seems never to have been more than a ballad cycle—or else the ballads have no connexion with the epic. It is the same with the South Slav ballads.[7] In fact, the only East European epics that seem to have disintegrated into ballads are the Byzantine epic of Digenes Akritas already mentioned and the (lost) epic of King Solomon.[8]

Ballad composition in Europe sets in during the twelfth century both in the East and in the West, almost simultaneously. The exact causes producing it are still shrouded in obscurity, as are the causes behind the sudden and quite as universal epic development a century earlier—the *Schah Nameh* pretty well coincides with the *Kathâ Sarit Sâgara* and the *Song of Roland*. The new *genre* was at first considered far too frivolous to be worthy of written transmission, and thus it happens that no ballad is known which antedates the fifteenth century. Yet we have allusions in the Latin chronicles which leave no doubt about the existence of the ballad, and in one instance we possess the Latin transcription of what is no doubt a genuine popular ballad. That transcription we owe to a migratory legend, that of the dancers struck with a malediction, which appeared to the chroniclers to deserve being put on paper, on account of its moral. The song sung by the dancers is unquestionably a ballad[9]:

> Equitabat Boso per silvam frondosam,
> Ducebat sibi Mersuindem formosam;
> Quid stamus? cur non imus?

Surveying Europe, we find, roughly speaking, four different bodies of ballad themes, each with a territory of its own. The most important and probably also the largest of these, the Latin cycle, comprises France, Catalonia, part of Castile, Portugal, and Northern Italy. The second, both in size and importance, is Teutonic, comprising the British Isles, Germany, the Netherlands, Scandinavia including the Faroe Islands and Iceland, and parts of Poland and Bohemia. The third comprises the Castilian *romances*, and the fourth is made up of the Balkan ballads and the Russian *bylíny*. The first and second group are fairly closely connected, and whole themes occur both in France and, say, in Denmark. Between the other cycles there is little connexion, though some French themes went into the making of Castilian ballads, whilst some Russian *bylíny*, for example those dealing with Ilya of Moroum, appear to have been known in Northern Germany, and some Byzantine ballads, such as those dealing with Digenes Akritas and King Solomon, were not altogether unknown in the West. Within the Teutonic cycle there is a closer connexion between England and Scotland on the one hand and Denmark and Norway on the other than there is between the British Isles and Germany. Central and Southern Italy stand altogether outside the ballad development, producing only lyric folk-songs. In Germany the number of lyric folk-songs far exceeds that of ballads, whilst in Britain and Scandinavia precisely the reverse obtains.

From what has just been said it follows that ballads, like popular tales and folk-songs, migrate. They all have migrated over a given territory, irrespective of linguistic boundaries, and in several instances they have even invaded the territory of a neighbouring ballad cycle. If one looks more closely into the territory occupied by each group, one cannot help noting, however, that what appear at first sight to be linguistic frontiers are really only the demarcation lines of different dialects. Thus the Catalan language is not so very different from Provençal, and the closeness of the Galician dialect (to which Portuguese is related) to French comes out in the great influence exercised by French lyric poetry upon Portuguese lyric poetry throughout the Middle Ages. Again the North Italian dialects are really Gallo-Roman, and the linguistic frontier between France and Italy runs farther south. Very much the same situation holds true for English and the Scandinavian languages and for German and Dutch. Often enough, the same rhyme can be retained in the process of translation. The same may be said about the relationship of South Slav and Russian; and thus out-and-out translation of ballads took place on a relatively limited scale, to wit, in the transition of themes from France to Denmark, and from Byzantine Greek into South Slav, Rumanian, or Russian. The few cases of translation from German into a Slav dialect are altogether negligible. What is noticeable at once is the striking parallelism that is found to exist between literary currents and the migration of ballad themes. Literary translations from Old French into Old Norse abound from the thirteenth century on, and the same fact obtains for the relations of Byzantine literature with the Slavonic and Rumanian languages. The task of translation may thus well have fallen, more often than not, to people accustomed to that type of work, that is, to clerks.

As has already been noted, the ballad may occasionally serve as a dance-song. The dance in question was a group dance or reel, usually called *carol* in the Middle English documents, and practised chiefly by the upper strata of society. It would be erroneous to conclude from this fact that the ballad originated as a dance-song; for neither in England, nor in Spain, nor even in the Slavonic countries is there any evidence that this type of narrative song was used for this new purpose. The movement seems to have started in Eastern France and from there to have reached Germany and Denmark. There dance and ballad continued as a courtly pastime down to the period of the Reformation, and the first collection of Danish ballads was actually started at the request of a queen. Later the commoners imitated, as usual, the forms and pastimes of the court and the nobility; and both dance and ballad in their original connexion exist to this day on the Faroe Islands. On the Continent the dance disappeared after the importation of new forms from France and Germany. The ballad lingered on, and in the last century was found by the Danish folklorist E. T. Kristensen to be sung on all possible occasions, even as a cradle song. It is to this flexibility that we owe its preservation in the Scandinavian countries.

Once well established, the ballad type served as a vehicle for entirely different conceptions: the political broadside, the robber ballad and the doggerel. The Protestant Reformation had drawn wider and wider circles into the vortex of public life; the newspaper had not yet put in its appearance, and thus the ballad was found to be the best vehicle to convey news. A good number of these ballads were composed by professionals who recited them at fairs and in public places, often illustrating them with rude sketches drawn on canvas.[10] Thus in the seventeenth and down to the eighteenth century news of wars, floods, earthquakes, etc., were spread in this way. Public executions were no less singled out for poetic treatment. The doggerel has survived the newspaper, even in countries where the latter has perhaps larger circles of readers than anywhere else; in the United States, for example, every disaster, a flood, a cyclone, or even a serious railway accident, is followed by a crop of ballads of this sort, extremely ludicrous, on the whole, decidedly melodramatic and for that very reason quite popular. In Spain similar ballads continued to be composed throughout the nineteenth century, their heroes being, as a rule, highwaymen and bullfighters.

Whilst the origin of the ballad is shrouded in darkness, there yet seems to have existed some connexion between this type of poetry and the cult. For example, the legend of the dancers of Kolbigk implies that the *carole* was particularly practised on the eve of feast-days, or sometimes of great fast-days, of the Church. One might also adduce the legend of the Devil who mingles with the dancers on just such an occasion. No doubt, the mediaeval clergy strove to suppress the custom, and this fact alone militates against the supposition that it originated within the Church. It may in fact be a survival from an earlier period, when it was connected with some heathen cult and used to narrate some more or less ludicrous episode in the life of the deity; and some of the stories related by Snorri of Thor and Loki might well originally have been cult-songs connected with some fertility rite. It is to be noted that in Spain the ballads to this day cling to the custom of *romerías* or pilgrimages made to some local shrine; and there is a certain amount of evidence pointing in the same direction in Brittany, the *pays des pardons par excellence.*

However that may be, the age of the type has of course little to do with the age of the individual ballads, none of which, as has been said before, goes back further than the fifteenth century. If in spite of this hard and fast fact the Anthropological School, under the auspices of scholars like Andrew Lang and Lêon Pineau,[11] has attempted to establish for the older ballads a dateless antiquity, such fancies rest on very insecure foundations. This leads us to a consideration of the survivals found in ballads.

Such survivals are indeed not wanting, any more than they are wanting in the fairy tale and the epic. Thus in the justly famous Danish ballad of *Earl Brand* we meet with the power of name. The hero proves invulnerable until his beloved calls him by his name, to save her youngest brother, and immediately he falls down dead, covered with wounds. The very same feature occurs in one of the versions of the old Ermanaric legend and was no doubt once a piece of living belief.[12] Yet there is nothing to warrant that when the ballad was first composed it was not already a survival which on account of its poetic qualities (it would be vain to deny these) was taken over either from some older piece of poetry or saga or from the lingering superstitions of the masses. One might on the same basis argue that the savage custom of finger mutilation was still practised in Central Europe during the thirteenth century, because such an episode occurs in the Middle High German epic *Die Rabenschlacht.*[13]

In ballad poetry the sister's son occupies a position singularly close to the hero, his uncle. Combining this curious fact with a passage in Tacitus, certain scholars have leaped to the conclusion that there is a trace of matriarchy.[14] Incidentally, it might be observed that the same ideas have been put forward for the Teutonic epic. In reality those passages merely prove the existence of an epic formula, taken over by the ballad poetry no doubt from the older epic. How the epic formula arose in the first place, we cannot now be sure of knowing ; neither does it belong to this subject.

In the Danish ballad of *Svend Dyring* the dead mother comes out of her grave to take care of her child neglected by a stepmother. The same theme occurs in the form of fairy tales, and local and migratory legends, on which the ballad may simply have drawn. Yet beliefs of that type, though doubtless quite old, are by no means dead even nowadays ; on the contrary, they are apt to be part and parcel of living superstition.

In another Scandinavian ballad a woman suffers herself to die rather than allow her lover to give her the necessary assistance in the hour of childbirth. Behind it lies the taboo that no male must witness the act in question, a taboo found in many savage societies. Yet the taboo is almost equally strong among the peasantry and the *petite bourgeoisie* of present-day Europe. At least I still remember the horror I aroused when in a similar case I suggested calling in a competent physician in the place of a manifestly incompetent midwife. The ballad, on the strength of this particular survival, might have originated in the twentieth century.

In a third Scandinavian ballad an infant in the cradle begins to speak, foreboding a future act of blood-revenge. The latter practice is not entirely dead even now, and the motive of speaking infants is widespread in folk-literature. I suspect that in this case (as in many others) it is connected with the idea of the *Act of Truth*, a motive of Indian origin.[15] The seeming impossible happens in confirmation of the truth of a statement made by one of the actors.

There is the motive of the rose and the briar growing out of the tombs of Fair Margaret and Sweet William, considered, by enthusiasts, as a clear evidence of the belief in metempsychosis. They overlook the important fact that this motive gained a tremendous popularity in consequence of its occurrence in the Tristan Romance, translated, as we know, into practically every European language of some moment. In the *Tristan* itself it certainly does not belong to the oldest fund of the legend, but is no doubt a later addition, at all events a floating motive that serves well to adorn a tale with a tragic ending.

What does not appear to have been noticed in this connexion is the occurrence of the identical, or rather of the opposite, motive in the *Thebais* of Statius. There we are told how the flame of the funeral pyre consuming the corpses of the two hostile brothers Eteocles and Polynices split in two, as it were, thus indicating that hate as well as love can outlive death. It is noteworthy that some scholars saw in this episode but an ingenious invention of the Roman poetaster. Yet the recurrence of the motive in an Indian story [16] would point to the fact that we are dealing with a piece of genuine folk-lore.

There is the Scottish and Scandinavian ballad of *Binnorie*, based upon the story of the *Singing Bone*, which might also be regarded, with a certain show of reason, as an illustration of the belief in metempsychosis.[17] The story is, however, a typical fairy tale, which has come down in a large number of versions and must have arisen in one place, Flanders, according to Dr. Lutz Mackensen, but more probably India. At all events, the ballad proves absolutely nothing for the belief in question in Northern Europe.

The famous ballad immortalized by Bürger's *Lenore* presupposes belief in the Living Corpse or Vampire. Yet the ballad is one of those which originated in Eastern Europe and from there spread over the Teutonic world as far as Iceland.[18]

The list might be prolonged, as indeed a whole volume might be written on the fallacies of the Anthropological School; it would serve only as an illustration of Bacon's well-known maxims on the shortcomings of the human mind. Nor is it my purpose to detract from the merit of such scholars as the late Andrew Lang, whose genius is equalled by few of the present generation and excelled by none. The Anthropological School has done a wonderful service to science by exploding the brilliant fancies of Max Müller and his school of solar mythologists. It is not surprising that it should have overstepped itself in turn; and I do not doubt in the least, but rather hope, that the purely literary method as propounded in the present volume will in the not too distant future be replaced by something better.

One may next inquire into the nature of the material utilized by the popular ballad. To give the answer at once, the ballad poets, like Shakespeare, took their material wherever they found it. Where ballads grew out of older epics, as the Spanish romances grew out of the *cantares de gesta*, the Danish ballads out of the German cycle of the Nibelungs, the Greek songs of Digenes Akritas out of the Byzantine *épopée*, and the Russian *bylíny* of Solomon and the faithless Salomónya out of a lost Byzantine epic on the same subject, they inherited their material as it were from the epic. Where no epic ever existed, as in Finland and among the South-Slavs, they worked up the old legendary material directly and without the epic medium. In either case the material was swelled by new influxes from the most varied sources. Thus the Spanish *romances* would utilize the subject-matter of French romances of chivalry, of Italian *novelle*, and of Moorish love romances, themselves of Oriental origin. Ancient material would be worked up in ballad form both in Southern and Northern Europe. The ancient love story of Hero and Leander thus ended up in the German ballad *Es waren zwei Königskinder.*[19] The myth of Orpheus and Eurydice reached Britain through a Celtic medium which transformed Hades into a fairy monarch abducting the woman, and finally became an English ballad.[20] The famous legend of Saint Eustachius forms the subject-matter of two Breton ballads, a German and a Danish one.[21] The Eddic *þrymskviða* was reworked in ballad form,[22] and so was the tale of Hagbard and Signy, so touchingly told by Saxo Grammaticus.[23] The French ballad *La fille du roi Louis* is based upon a migratory legend, probably of Byzantine origin, which forms the subject-matter of the Old French romance *Amadas et Ydoine*, of a ballad by Audefroi le Bâtard entitled *La belle Ydoine*, and of a Greek romance, the *Erotokritos*, the work of the Cretan Vincentius Cornaros, who wrote in the sixteenth century.[24] The *Lenore* ballad, as has already been said, is of Eastern origin. In the Greek variants it is the brother, Constantine, who returns from the dead, in fulfilment of a vow, and brings his sister back to her mother.[25] In Russia the tale assumed a more gruesome aspect; the lover comes and abducts his bride, riding with her to the cemetery. The Breton lay of Marie de France, called *Le Frêne*, exists also in ballad form[26]; and the story of Fredegunde and Landerich, her lover, told in the *Liber Historiae Francorum*, exists also in the form of a Modern Greek ballad.[27] Some ballads share the same plot with certain fairy tales; witness the ballad *Binnorie* quoted above and the *Blue-Beard* Ballad (*La Maumariée vengée par ses frères*).[28] Even Biblical matter was not considered unsuitable; witness the Flemish ballad *Herr Halowyn*, which unquestionably grew out of the story of Judith and Holofernes.[29] Historical events were worked up in ballad form, long before the rise of the doggerel; witness the ballad cycle attached to the murder of the Danish king Eric Glipping.[30] Sometimes older legends and chronicles were drawn upon by learned and semi-learned folk and made into ballads. Such seems to be the case with the Italian ballad, also known in Germany, of the *Donna Lombarda*, which is ultimately derived from Paul the Deacon,[31] and with the Spanish *romances* on Rodrick, the last king of the ancient Gothic dynasty.[32]

The Russian *bylíny* of King Solomon and his faithless wife, as has already been said, are ultimately derived from a lost Byzantine epic which narrated the vicissitudes of the old wizard king as they had been worked up by Jewish authors with the utilization of Indian material. More interesting still, if that is possible, is the case of the Russian *bylíny* of Dobrýnya Nikítich the Dragon-slayer and Marína Ignátievna the witch.[33] This Marína is but an avatar of the Semitic mother-goddess of old, accompanied by her sacred doves, who slays her lovers after having enjoyed their love or transforms them into beasts. There can be little doubt that the theme reached Russia directly from the countries of the Near East, where it was known all through the Middle Ages.

If the ballad is, according to its definition, popular in origin or by transmission, one would naturally expect to find in it most, if not all, of the features that distinguish all popular art, the fairy tale, for example. Such is indeed the case, and the resemblance between fairy tale technique and ballad technique is certainly most striking.

Like the fairy tale the ballad is fond of fixed formulas and numbers. The same, or virtually the same, action will recur three times running. The Maid freed from the Gallows will invoke her parents first, her brothers next, and finally her sweetheart, who brings about the solution by freeing her after the others have refused. The crowing of the cock, which drives away ghosts, is formulated thus. The black cock crows first, putting the spectres on the alert but not driving them off yet. Then the red cock crows, with not much greater effect ; but when the white cock crows, announcing the break of day, their power is ended and the hero or heroine is saved. Or, a procession will come of ladies fair in the extreme ; it is thought that the queen is among them ; but we are told that she is not ; these are only her handmaids. Next comes a procession of women fairer still, but again the queen is not one of them. At last she comes herself and is a thousand times fairer still. As will be seen from the last two examples, the centre of gravity of the story rests with the third stage, the superlative as it were. In other words, the technique of the fairy tale over again.[34]

Like the fairy tale the ballad delights in putting royalty on the scene or, if that is not possible, adorning its heroes, even if they are only highwaymen or little better, with royal splendour. The palaces are of gold and marble, the heroes and heroines dress in velvet and silk ; they eat on golden tables and play with draught-boards of gold and pieces of ivory ; their steeds are the best horses of Araby, shod with horseshoes of gold or silver. The maidens are the fairest of the fair, and the metaphors used are quite as extravagant. It is idle to speculate about the reasons for this idealization ; suffice it to say that it is universal, and the simple peasant of the English countryside entertains practically the same notions about Buckingham Palace.

When the ballads are decidedly epic in tone and arranged in cycles, the king is strikingly similar to the epic king of the Charlemagne and Arthurian romances ; he is only a figure-head presiding over a group of heroes every one of whom has his own traditional fame and his own tales. The monarch himself does little or nothing, and in a number of cases he is depicted either as a capricious tyrant or as a downright fool. This is noticeable in some of the Charlemagne and in the majority of the Russian Vladímir ballads. Scholars like Léon Gautier wanted to see in this feature a reflection of the contempt in which the royal power was held by the great vassals. That may be correct ; at least the vassals who listened to those epics and ballads would have been the last to object to such a picture. Yet one may well ask whether the very arrangement of the epic material did not necessarily have such a consequence. Agamemnon, it will be remembered, was not the sovereign of the Achaeans, any more than Godfrey of Bouillon was the sovereign of the Crusaders, nor had Homer any personal reason to make little of him. Yet it must be admitted that in the *Iliad* he does not play the most dignified of rôles.

A word must be said about the weird element in popular ballads.[35] No doubt, it looms large in the English, Scottish and Scandinavian ballads. It amounts to little in the German and French, and it is almost entirely absent in the Castilian. Nor can it be said to be particularly prominent in the Russian and Greek. It is therefore erroneous to postulate it as one of the decisive features of ballad poetry. Nor is it difficult to explain. For this purpose it will be best to take a few illustrative cases.

In a certain number of ballads omens, especially dreams, play an important rôle. The feature is not peculiar to the ballad, however; it is common to epic poetry, from the *Pharsalia* to the *Song of Roland* and the Spanish *Cantar de Mío Cid*. It is extremely likely that the ballad took this feature over from the epic.

In certain Scandinavian ballads we hear of a werewolf who attacks a pregnant woman, and of a 'night-raven', evidently some bird of evil omen. Neither figure is peculiar to ballads, and both occur in Danish local legends. Similarly, the vampire of the Greek and Russian *Lenore* ballads is a part of the living folk-lore of Modern Greece and Slavonic Europe. Much the same may be said about the Danish *Ellerkonge*, the prototype of Goethe's *Erlkönig*. What accounts for the relative absence of such elements in the South European ballads is not altogether clear. Certainly it is not, as Heine conjectured, the more intense sunlight which is hostile to the hobgoblins. India with its horrible rakshasas would alone suffice to refute such a theory. It is probably the long literary tradition dating from the days of Roman civilization that was unfavourable to fancies of that sort. After all, Spain emerged from barbarism about a thousand years in advance of Denmark and Iceland.

Two more features one would seek in a popular *genre* and seek in vain in the older ballads, to wit, the didactic element and the happy ending. The former, be it said at once, was not long in slipping into the ballad, and the doggerels are highly moralizing in tone. Thus, for example, an eighteenth-century German doggerel describing the execution of a girl guilty of infanticide makes the hangman say at the end, addressing the public:

Hochverehrtes Publicum,
Bringt doch keine Kinder um!

Yet the older ballad uses more restraint, and it is significant that it was the poet Bürger who carried into the old *Lenore* ballad the moralizing element :

> Learn patience, though thy heart should break,
> Nor seek God's mandates to control !

In regard to the tragic ending, postulated as an essential feature of the popular ballad, it is well to be careful. Ballads with a happy ending are by no means rare and even fairly common in Spain and France. Yet granting all this, one must admit that melodrama is foreign to the spirit of the older ballads. This fact and the absence of the didactic element make it clear, I think, that the ballad originated in circles different from those which shaped the fairy tale and local legend ; that, like the prose saga, it is the creation of people ' who knew their genealogy '.

The tragic ending and the fundamental tragic note connect the ballad with the epic. For it may well be said that practically all the great epics, from the *Iliad* to the *Roland*, the *Beowulf*, and the *Nibelungen*, end tragically. The reason lies, I believe, entirely in the fact that the epic is an aristocratic form of poetry and that the ballad is a popular offshoot of the epic. After all, it is only the few, though hardly the ' happy ' few, who fully realize the sad truth that

> The end of every ship is drowning,
> And the end of every kiln is burning ;
> The end of every feast is wasting,
> And the end of every laugh is sighing.

The author of the admirable *Book of Kohelcth*, if he was not King Solomon and not even a king at all, certainly was no commoner. But let us now turn to the genesis of the ' popular ' ballad.

At the time of this writing two theories hold the field, the one sponsored by the late Francis B. Gummere, the other by Dr. Louise Pound. Dr. Gummere, starting from the material of Child and Grundtvig, reached the conclusion that the oldest part of the ballad body was the tail, that is, the burden or refrain. This burden was sung to accompany the *carole* ; the narrative was added later, often by improvisation and with the co-operation of the dancing community. In opposition to this thesis Dr. Pound upholds that of individual authorship, and rightly denies all original connexion between ballad and dance.

Now it is true without question that the burden or refrain is indeed a very important part of the British and Scandinavian ballads, and even the improvisation has been watched by collectors such as G. Pitrè in Italy and H. N. Ulrichs in Modern

Greece. Further, we have a curious illustration of the popular desire to fill out the text, rather rudimentary at the start, in the tale of the mortal who overhears an elf-dance and completes the elves' song, thereby winning their gratitude. This story no doubt exemplifies the process of accretion. Yet it must be remembered that accretion is not the same thing as improvisation, certainly is no creation *ex nihilo* as Professor Gummere seemed inclined to think; and, furthermore, those improvisations are in fact anything but narrative poems. On the contrary, they are rather lyrical effusions, not at all unlike the famous funeral *ballate* of the Corsican *voceratrici*. But quite apart from these considerations, Gummere's thesis is contradicted by two facts: first, that the burden is found outside the ballad, in some genuine specimens of epic poetry; second, that a vast body of ballads, in Southern Europe, lack the burden. The former objection, the existence of a burden in the Old French *chansons de geste Gormond et Isembard* and the *Chanson de Willame*, might be combated by an assumption of the influence of ballad poetry on those epics, an assumption for which some proof could be found, I believe, quite apart from the question of the refrain. The second objection is fatal to the thesis, and it is absolutely impossible to derive the Spanish *romance* and the Russian *bylína* from a burden that exists in neither one of the two.

Little need be said about the form of the English and Scottish ballad, since the reader may safely be presumed to be familiar with the type. The Scandinavian ballads show essentially the same form. The French, German, and Slavonic ballad metre is equally short, whilst the Spanish epic verse with its unusual length (from fourteen to eighteen syllables to the line) was broken up into two equal parts. As a consequence only the even verse lines stand in assonance or rhyme, usually in assonance. The same phenomenon is observable in Greece, where the long 'political' verse, as it is called, was similarly broken up. In Eastern Europe the trochaic metre predominates, and it must be left to the students of the Slavonic languages to determine whether this peculiarity is due to the influence exercised upon the Russians by the native Finnish population which inhabited Russia before the Slavs. I might add that the latter supposition is none too likely, considering that the South Slavs have practically the same ballad metre.

What is true of folk-tales and proverbs is equally so of ballads; that is, certain definite types are clearly discernible, by reason of identity of plot. As has already been said, in a few cases a certain ballad type will even coincide with a fairy tale type, and in a reconstruction of its history fairy tale versions and ballad texts must both be taken into consideration. In the tracing of the history of ballad types the geographic-historical method must be accompanied by a certain amount of purely textual criticism. The fact is that by a comparison of the rhymes of various ballad texts conclusions can be drawn as to the relationship between them. Often also the very form of a given version betrays the fact that it is a translation. Thus the Scandinavian ballads lack rhetorical questions as well as the expressions *said he*, *quoth she*, etc.; and when they occur in a Danish ballad one may be virtually certain that it was translated from the German. This critical comparison as a rule leads to a determination of the archetype, whilst allusions to historical events and the occurrence of certain historical names may lead further to the discovery of the date and place of origin. This work has been done, with a great deal of scholarly acumen and accuracy, by the Danish scholars Svend Grundtvig, and Axel Olrik, the American F. J. Child, and the Frenchman G. Doncieux. It is now in progress for the Norwegian material under the direction of Professor Liestøl.

The popular ballad has not played the humble rôle of Cinderella for as long a time as the fairy tale. As early as the sixteenth century Sir Philip Sidney admired the poetic power of some of the old Scottish and English ballads, and in the same century the first ballad collection was undertaken in Denmark About the same period, or a little after, Juan Díaz de Rengifo speaks with a good deal of praise of the old Spanish *romances*; and in the seventeenth century Molière opposed the simple tune *Si le roi m'avait donné* to the artificial madrigals and sonnets then in vogue at the court. However, it took the romantic revival to stimulate anything approaching scientific interest in this type of folk-lore. The publication of Bishop Percy's *Reliques*, in 1765, marks an epoch in the history of English letters; but it was more than half a century later that a systematic collection of ballads was begun. The names of Lockhart, Jacob Grimm, Ferdinand Wolf [36] and Svend Grundtvig mark the history of the discovery of the Spanish, Portuguese and Scandinavian material. At the same time Fauriel published the first collection of Greek ballads in French translation.[37] The Austrian scholar Friedrich Krauss laid open the treasures of the South Slavs, whilst Russian collectors penetrated into the forest lands of the North-eastern governments to put down in writing the *bylíny* as they were then sung by the fisherfolk on the great Russian lakes. Nor should the name of Julius Krohn be forgotten in connexion with the Finnish ballad material.[38] What inspiration these pursuits have given to literature need not be recounted here. Suffice it to say that neither Burns nor Scott would have been what they were but for the folk poetry of the Scottish Lowlands. Byron no doubt obtained a good deal of inspiration from Levantine balladry, chiefly in the Greek language; and, last but not least, the metre of the American epic, the only American epic in existence, was taken—from the Finnish *Kalevala*.

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CHAPTER X

CHARMS, RHYMES, RIDDLES

THE charm belongs essentially to the realm of magic and will therefore, so far as its psychical base is concerned, receive further discussion in a subsequent chapter. At the same time it is well to point out that, quite apart from its magic meaning and significance, it is also a part of oral folklore, a creation, like folk-song and ballad, of the popular mind answering to certain definite artistic impulses. Yet here it is necessary to make a distinction. It is safe to say that the vast majority of charms, against diseases as well as against thieves, collected in recent times and published (one wonders why), are as devoid of artistic form as no doubt they are of all practical efficacy and (one might add) of all genuinely scientific interest. For they represent a crazy assemblage of formulas no longer understood even by the reciter himself, none of which can possibly have arisen among the folk and in Europe. On the contrary, they are obviously debased learned materials, taken from Mediterranean collections which may well go back to the magic-saturated last days of the Roman Empire, and in more cases than one even show a suspicious kinship to the Jewish Kabbala. They illustrate in the best possible manner H. Naumann's theory of the assimilation, i.e., generally, debasement, of learned matter sinking from the upper to the lower strata of society.

Yet it would be erroneous to class all charms with this group, as a simple reflection will show. For charms are ultimately based upon the naïve idea mankind has always entertained of the power of the word so gently ridiculed by Goethe:

Im ganzen—haltet euch an Worte
Dann geht ihr durch die sichre Pforte
Zum Tempel der Gewissheit ein.
Mit Worten lässt sich trefflich streiten,
Mit Worten ein System bereiten,
An Worte lässt sich trefflich glauben,
Von einem Wort lässt sich kein Jota rauben.

Nor is it perhaps by accident that in the great German poem this clever advice is given to a youth who is at the same time urged to study medicine. For it is not saying too much to maintain that all medical art took its inception from the charm[1]; and still in Pindar's verses [2] on the art of Asklepios,

τοὺς μὲν μαλακαῖς ἐπαοιδαῖς ἀμφέπων
τοὺς δὲ προσανέα πίνοντας, ἢ γυίοις περάπτων πάντοθεν
φάρμακα τοὺς δὲ τομαῖς ἔστασεν ὀρθούς,

the magic charm occupies the first place, medicines and the surgeon's knife taking only the second and third. Under these circumstances the ubiquity of the charm may be *a priori* supposed. People did not have to wait for the diffusion of the cabbalistic pseudo-science in Mediaeval Europe to heal diseases and still the flowing blood by oral charms.

Even the contents of these popular charms reveal so simple an association of ideas that an independent origin in different places and at different times may without hesitation be assumed. If, for example, the second Merseburg charm,[3] used to cure the sprain of a horse, reads thus

bên zi bêna, bluot zi bluoda,
lid zi geliden, sôsę gelîmida sîn,

it is matched pretty well by another from the Sanskrit *Atharva-veda* [4] which I translate thus:

Marrow join marrow, and limb join limb,
What thou hast lost in flesh and bones grow again,
Marrow join marrow, skin join skin above.

The partisans of the Aryan theory would in this fairly close parallelism have seen but another proof of the Aryan heritage transmitted along parallel lines both to the authors of the *Vedas* and to the ancient Germans. Considering the antiquity of such charms, which certainly go back into Indo-European times, such a theory cannot be denied offhand; but spontaneous and independent origin is at least as likely.

The Vedic verse helps, however, to explode one of the most vicious theories of recent origin and, though true to a certain point, quite erroneous in its bold generalizations. It claims nothing less than that all charms of this type are Oriental importations and of Christian provenance.[5] The argumentation is most mechanical and forced. It so happens that the pagan charm in question, speaking of Wodan and Balder, is the only specimen of its kind, whilst the parallel versions, Anglo-Saxon, Scandinavian, and Finnish, mention instead figures of the Christian mythology. The argument is vicious, because everything was *against* the preservation of pagan charms and everything *for* their Christianization, whilst one may justly wonder what on earth should have induced a Christian clerk to substitute heathen names for the Christian ones in an originally Christian charm. Quite apart from this consideration, the association of ideas involved, ' Just as the accident befalling the deity was promptly cured by the power of the god, so may the particular accident afflicting Mr. So-and-so likewise be cured ', is so primitive and rudimentary that the Europeans certainly did not have to wait for the importation of Mediterranean and Christian material to hit upon such notions. It is far more likely that, as so often, we have a parallel development in the Mediterranean countries and in Central and Northern Europe, by which assumption the possibility of exchanges is by no means excluded ; and, as was pointed out above, the old material was certainly swelled, in mediaeval times, by mass importations from the pseudo-scientific literatures of Mediterraneans and Jews.

To show exactly the general wording of charms of this nature, I shall here quote a few, still current, no doubt, in the English countryside. To extract a thorn the following charm was recited :

Happy man that Christ was born,
He was crownèd with a thorn ;
He was piercèd through the skin,
For to let the poison in.
But his five wounds, so they say,
Closed before He passed away.
In with healing, out with thorn,
Happy man that Christ was born.

Or, to prevent the prick of a thorn from festering, recourse was had to much the same association of ideas ; witness the following :

Christ was of a virgin born,
And he was prickèd with a thorn,
And it did neither bell nor swell,
And I trust in Jesus this never will.

Closely related to charms are invocations ; as a matter of fact, the former often enough comprise the latter. Certainly, they are more often than not connected with magic actions. Thus, for example, when a girl on St. Valentine's (or St. Luke's

Night wishes to see her future husband in a dream, she will invoke the saint as follows:

Good Valentine (*or* St. Luke, St. Luke), be kind to me,
In dream let me my true love see.

To the same class belongs the invocation to the cuckoo:

Cuckoo, cherry-tree,
Good bird, tell me,
How many years have I to live?

or the invocation to the apple-pip:

Pippin, pippin, paradise,
Tell me where my true love lies,
East, west, north, and south,
Pilling Brig, or Cocker Mouth,

or that to the bat:

Airy mouse, airy mouse: fly over my head,
And you shall have a crust of bread;
And when I brew and when I bake,
You shall have a piece of my wedding cake.

Among invocations must further be classed the rhymes pronounced in connexion with love oracles, as the following:

The even ash-leaf in my left hand,
The first man I meet shall be my husband,
The even ash-leaf in my glove,
The first I meet shall be my love;
The even ash-leaf in my breast,
The first man I meet's whom I love best;
The even ash-leaf in my right hand,
The first I meet shall be my man.
Even ash, even ash, I pluck thee,
This night my true love for to see,
Neither in his rick nor in his rear,
But in the clothes he does every day wear.

Readers of Goethe's *Faust* will of course recall the rhymes quoted or alluded to by Gretchen in the famous garden scene.

The rhyme, known in many parts of England:

Yarrow, sweet yarrow, the first that I have found,
In the name of Jesus Christ I pluck thee from the ground;
As Jesus loved sweet Mary and took her for His dear,
So in a dream this night I hope my true love will appear,

is modelled after the charms designed to cure diseases. The fact that it is evidently pronounced on the lifting of a plant from the ground relates it to the class of charms recited on the plucking of healing herbs, no doubt to increase their efficacy. I content myself with quoting one as a good representative specimen:

All hail, thou holy herb, vervin,
  Growing on the ground;
On the Mount of Calvary
  There wast thou found;
Thou helpest many a grief,
  And staunchest many a wound.
In the name of sweet Jesus,
  I lift thee from the ground.

Accompaniments of magic ceremonies are also the various rhymes pronounced on the occasion of the wassailing of apple-trees,[6] designed to increase the annual crop; witness the following:

Health to thee, good apple-tree,
Well to bear pocketfuls, hatfuls,
Peckfuls, bushel-bag-fuls,

or the even more famous

Cock Robin is dead and lies in his grave,
Hum-ha! lies in his grave.
Place an old apple tree over his head,
Hum-ha! over his head.
When they were ripe and ready to fall,
Hum-ha! ready to fall.
There comes an old woman a-picking them up,
Hum-ha! a-picking them up.
Cock Robin jumps up and gives her a good knock,
Hum-ha! gives her a good knock.

The last of the two wassailing-songs quoted furnishes a good example of the debasement going on all the time even with songs of this nature; for it is now essentially a children's rhyme. Such facts (and the above instance is certainly not an isolated example) have led the Anthropological School to the belief that such rhymes and jingles will be most apt to reflect directly a bygone culture with customs now long dead and forgotten. Yet, unless stated as conservatively as possible, such a conclusion would be extremely rash. Take the wassailing-song for instance. The custom is, so far as I know, still practised in twentieth-century England, though on a more limited scale. It is not too much to suppose that in the eighteenth century it was still common from one end of the island to the other. What more natural, then, that children picked it up, converting it into an ordinary jingle-rhyme. They might have picked up—no doubt often they did pick up—with the same ease some strain snatched from an eighteenth-century comic opera.

In support of this view I can quote a German specimen of which the recent and anything but popular origin is definitely known. I refer to the jingle:

Robinson, Robinson
Fuhr in einem Luftballon
In die Höh; in die Höh'
Mit der Jungfrau Salome,

to which there is sometimes added a sort of burden, consisting of two lines, with a rather ambiguous meaning. The hero of the jingle is one of the predecessors of modern aeronauts, a certain *Robertson*, who made his experiments about 1894. The lady was not connected with him at all but with his contemporary and colleague Blanchard, and her true name was *Simone.* No doubt, the song originated in some third-rate revue or vaudeville show.

Other instances adduced by Lady Gomme, the author of that remarkable and quite excellent collection of Nursery Rhymes in the English tongue, are not much more convincing. *Babbity Bowster*, the Old Scottish dance, for example, still shows the chasing of the bride at the close of the wedding, undoubtedly a 'primitive' custom. But the same custom is still observable in continental European weddings; it was probably equally current in eighteenth-century England. The game *Nuts in May* is taken to reflect marriage by capture. In a way it may do so, but how indirectly! What actually happened was that marriage by capture left its impress on wedding customs, even centuries after the institution itself had disappeared. The children copied only the wedding customs in question, and may have done so but recently.

The *Three Knights from Spain* is said to reflect marriage by purchase. Again I wonder whether the institution in question is as hoary as the Anthropological School thinks it to be. Have they ever read Hardy's delightful, though deeply tragical, novel *The Mayor of Casterbridge*? The *Lady of the Land* harks back to the custom of hiring servants at fairs. The custom in question is well attested for England down to the eighteenth century and for Ireland still later. The example is a good one, however, for we definitely know that in pre-Christian Ireland (and presumably even a good while after St. Patrick's preaching) it was not servants that were hired that way but wives, who, like the servants of a later day, were supposed to stay (or to be kept) for a year and a day. That custom, a sort of companionate marriage of the most modern type, had to give way. But the rhyme still survives:

For a year and a day
I promise to stay.

But, of course, it is neither the lawful human wife nor concubine, nor even the maid (which would be an exaggerated optimism !) who pronounces it, but the elfin wife of local legends. Thus by taking enough facts into consideration and by supposing the necessary number of intermediate links, the Anthropological School will eventually make out a good case for that true, even all too true, observation that everything is in a flow and that the history of man's intellectual development (if there is such a thing) does not show sudden leaps and breaks. What is certain is that in more cases than one children's games with their accompanying songs are the debased forms of old-fashioned ring-dances, reels and *caroles;* and it is to be regretted that Lady Gomme has not devoted some space to this quite interesting topic. Those dances, as is well known, were still common in England as late as the eighteenth century, and in Ireland they were wiped out only by the great famine toward the middle of the last century; though in this case the term *survival* may be used, it is yet well to remember that these are survivals of a rather 'mild' type.

Lest I be suspected of an act of the blackest ingratitude toward Lady Gomme, who has so generously placed at our disposal the very materials on which we base our criticism of her theories, I want to mention in passing the absurd notion which I read in a fairly recent doctor's dissertation. There I found it adduced as good evidence for the Anglo-Saxon conquest of England that in parts of Holstein certain counting-out rhymes still suggest the undertaking of such an expedition overseas. The author forgot that all over Northern Germany, by a pun similar to the one which Bede ascribes to Pope Gregory the Great, England is simply the 'land of angels', i.e. the Otherworld, or at all events a far-off fairy land. Thus the nightmare in certain Pomeranian local legends will hear her mother in 'England' call her

Marie Catherine
Treib aus deine Swîne.

Not quite explained are certain curious coincidences of such jingles both in Great Britain and on the Continent. For example, the English

Would you know how doth the peasant?
Would you know how doth the peasant?
Would you know how doth the peasant?
Sow his barley and his wheat?

And it's so, so, doth the peasant,
And it's so, so, doth the peasant,
And it's so, so, doth the peasant,
Sow his barley and his wheat,

is matched almost exactly by the German

Wollt ihr wissen, wie der Bauer seinen Hafer aussät?
Wollt ihr wissen, wie der Bauer seinen Hafer aussät?

Seht so, so sät der Bauer seinen Hafer aufs Feld,
Seht so, so sät der Bauer seinen Hafer aufs Feld.

Anglo-Saxon heritage or later borrowing? I think that with our present knowledge the question must be left open, though the use of the book-word *peasant* may point to the literary adaptation of a continental theme.

In other cases inconsistencies, contradictions, or mere triteness may betray the secondary character of a rhyme. For example, the French

Si l'orver voyait,
Si le sourd entendait,
Pas un homme ne vivrait

gives very good sense if we remember that by *sourd* is meant the salamander, reputed a most poisonous animal in mediaeval tradition. Yet the English equivalent:

If the viper could hear and the slowworm could see
Then England from serpents would never be free,

has no particular meaning at all.

At the same time it is well to remember that similar parallelisms are found in Central Europe and Scandinavia. Compare, for example, the German

Kuckucksknecht,
Sag'mir recht,
Sag'mir's klar,
Wieviel Jahr
Als ich noch eine Jungfrau bin?

and the Swedish

Göck, göck, sitt på quist,
Säg mig vist
hur månge år
Jag ôgift går.

Nor is the road of the migration (if such be assumed) always clear. For example, the well-known (though now somewhat old-fashioned) game called *Jack's alive and likely to live*, after the verses

Jack's alive and likely to live;
If he dies in your hand you've a forfeit to give,

or

Jack's alive and in very good health,
If he dies in your hand you must look to yourself,

which corresponds to the French *Petit bonhomme vit encore*, and which consists in the passing of a burning candle from hand to hand, is not matched by the South German *Stirbt der Fuchs, so gilt der Balg*, where the candle is evidently designated as the fox, but finds a very close parallel in Northern Germany with the game *Lütje läwt nog*.

The mention of this game requires at least a brief discussion of the theory advanced by the late Edward B. Tylor, who connected the game and its verses with the mediaeval heretic sect called *Boni Homines*. They were accused by the orthodox and their clergy of practising the most gruesome rites, that is, of killing little children and passing them around from hand to hand while they were slowly expiring, the supposed underlying idea being that the spirit of the slain child would descend upon the person in whose arms it had died. With all due regard for the great scholar and founder of the Anthropological School, I must confess that I am unable to think of a more baseless theory. The heretics who called themselves *Boni Homines* were merely the precursors of modern Protestantism and practised no worse rites than can be witnessed in the ordinary Methodist or Baptist chapel on Sundays. The silly fable bears all the earmarks of clerical invention and is to be put on a par with similar accusations of the pagan Romans levelled against their Christian compatriots, or the equally absurd clerical story relating how the German Stedinger, in the thirteenth century, solemnly kissed the less noble portions of a huge black cat, the incarnation of His Satanic Majesty, present in that form at every one of their meetings. If there is then any connexion at all between the game and the mediaeval Albigensians, the former is derived from the silly fable circulated about the latter by the Roman clergy; but, considering the local limitation of the Albigensian sect, it is more than doubtful whether even so superficial a connexion as here proposed can safely be assumed.

While thus reducing somewhat the anthropological fancies brought forth in connexion with such rhymes, we should not forget that to many of them there attaches a very definite and quite unmistakable historical flavour which it would be vain to deny. If such a jingle, evidently from the western counties, reads

Taffy was a Welshman,
Taffy was a thief,

it clearly reflects the friendly attitude of mind harboured, once upon a time, by a majority of English-speaking people toward the aborigines of the land, an attitude matched only by the equally friendly spirit of the Pilgrim Fathers towards the Indians, which an eighteenth-century author described with the words

First they fell upon their knees,
Then on the aborigines.

Or, if a German children's song says:

Bet, Kindlein, bet,
Morgen kommt der Schwed',
Morgen kommt der Oxestern,
Der wird die Kinder beten lern',

it unquestionably reflects the horrors of the Thirty Years War. The examples might be multiplied. Suffice it to say that Cromwell continues to be for Irish children what the Swedish chancellor Oxenstierna was, or, mayhap, still is, for German children who misbehave.

Or again, if in a fairly recent monograph[7] numerous survivals of mediaeval judicial customs in children's games and their accompanying rhymes are pointed out, there is no need to assume a hoary antiquity for such productions of the popular muse. As is well known, in matters of law and jurisprudence the

Middle Ages last, on the Continent, to the eve of the Great Revolution; in England, to the days of Jeremy Bentham; and in the United States to this day.

In still other cases a clear connexion exists between such rhymes and certain superstitions or story types. What explanation is one to give of the English

Ladybird, ladybird,
Fly away home,
Your house is on fire,
Your children all gone,

which is pretty closely matched by the French

Vole au firmament bleu,
Ton nid est en feu,
Les Turcs avec leur épée
Vont te tuer ta couvée,
Hanneton, vole, vole,
Hanneton, vole,

or the German

Maikäfer, fliege,
Dein Vater ist im Kriege,
Deine Mutter ist in Pommerland,
Pommerland ist abgebrannt,
Maikäfer, fliege ?

These jingles should be compared with the Portuguese charm against the sty: Aqui del rei! fogo na casa do terçol! (Attention! there is a fire in the house of the sty!), and with the fairly widespread tale relating how certain evil spirits are got rid of by an exclamation to the effect that their dwelling-place is on fire.

Before taking leave of this class of popular poetry, let us say a few words about its remarkable vitality, which is apt to be overlooked, precisely because of the apparent meaninglessness of these humble products of the popular muse. They appear to have survived all storms, all national catastrophes, and even crossed the great pond without getting lost on the road. At all events, in the New World, the United States and Canada, they are as widely current as they ever were in Great Britain, although the distances are many hundreds of times greater. They leave their impress on the literature of the day; and whilst a parody of Byron or even Shakespeare may not so readily be understood in modern America, a parody of one of these humble jingles will never fail of its purpose.

Among these products of the popular mind must also be reckoned the numerous poetical interpretations put upon the cries of animals and birds. An excellent example is furnished by the English *Song of the Sky-Lark*:

Up in the lift go we,
Tehee, tehee, tehee, tehee!
There's not a shoemaker on the earth
Can make a shoe to me, to me!
Why so, why so, why so?
Because my heel is as long as my toe.

Similarly, as is well known, a famous poem of Friedrich Rückert is based on the song or cry of the swallow:

Als ich Abschied nahm, als ich Abschied nahm,
Waren Kisten und Kasten voll,
Als ich wiederkam, als ich wiederkam,
War alles leer.

The French aetiological animal story of the nightingale and the blind-worm [8] is meant to explain the song of the bird interpreted thus:

Je ferai mon nid si haut, si haut, si haut, si bas!
Que tu ne le trouveras pas.

More utilitarian is the call of the American whip-poor-will, which is constantly fluttering around the Pennsylvanian Indians calling out his Indian name *wekolis*, to remind them of planting time, just as if he were saying '*hacki heck*', 'go and plant maize'.

Corresponding to the cumulative songs, current at the expense of some neighbouring community not regarded with special favour, we have certain jingles, short but to the point, and having no other purpose. The English rhyme

Congleton rare, Congleton rare,
Sold the Bible to pay for a bear,

obviously leads us back to the glorious days of bear-baiting. As a matter of fact, the commentary attached to the rhyme gravely tells us that the shocking transaction in question took place in 1601. What may console the inhabitants of that Cheshire town, if perchance they still know the jingle, is the fact that precisely the same tale was (or maybe still is) current about the town of Clifton, in Warwick. There the rhyme has this wording:

Clifton upon Dunsmore, in Warwickshire
Sold the Church Bible to buy a bear.

In this chapter must furthermore be included the various house inscriptions which, on the Continent at least, have been collected quite systematically. I shall here quote as an example one that appears to be fairly widespread in the Prussian province of Silesia, where I have found it extending over a considerable territory :

Der Mensch braucht ein Plätzchen
Und wär's noch so klein,
Davon er kann sagen,
Hier bin ich daheim.
Hier wohn' ich, hier bleib'ich,
Hier ruhe ich aus,
Hier ist meine Heimat,
Hier bin ich zu Haus.

The diffusion of such a verse over a given territory can be easily understood if due regard is had to the very pronounced tendency of country-folk everywhere to copy their neighbours. Yet the genuinely popular origin of such a poem may well be doubted, especially in a country where, as in Silesia, regionalist poetry has been flourishing since the end of the Thirty Years War. Where proverbs have been drawn upon to do service for house inscriptions the case is of course notably different. Thus again we see popular and ' learned ' strata side by side, more than once intermingling, yet always ' popular ' in the sense that, whatever their origin, they do reflect the view-point of the people. The didacticism, often fairly obtrusive, which comes out in an overwhelming majority of such house inscriptions, is perhaps the best illustration that can be adduced for this point.

A last department of oral folk-lore is the so-called popular riddle.[9] How ' popular ' some of the types are can best be seen from the following specimen, attested as early as the tenth century :

Volavit volucer sine plumis,
Sedit arbore sine foliis,
Venit homo absque manibus,
Conscendit illam sine pedibus,
Assavit illum sine igne,
Comedit illum sine ore.

This riddle, the solution of which is ' the snow ', is known in a considerable number of variants in the various vernacular tongues of the European continent and extends over most of Central and Northern Europe, being found even in Caucasia. The body of the riddle offering enough points of comparison, it was possible for

A. Aarne to trace its history with a fair amount of accuracy. From his monograph it seems quite clear that it originated in Central Europe and from there spread in the main in an easterly direction. The Finnish scholar has examined in much the same way and by much the same method the likewise quite ancient riddles of the book and the pen (unquestionably of learned origin), that of the year and the months, and, finally, the famous riddle of the Sphinx, which is known not only in Europe and the Near East but in Louisiana, South America and Fiji, where it was carried by European settlers.

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[1] O. Schrader, *Reallexikon der indogermanischen Altertumskunde*, I (1917), pp. 58 sqq.

[2] *Pyth.* III, 53–5.

[3] The bibliography on this subject has grown to wellnigh grotesque proportions. Cf. *Jahresbericht über die Erscheinungen auf dem Gebiete der germanischen Philologie*, under the heading *Zauber* or *Zauberspruch* in the chapter entitled *Mythologie und Sagenkunde*.

[4] IV, 2.

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CHAPTER XI

SUPERSTITION

SUPERSTITION, in common parlance, designates the sum of beliefs and practices shared by other people in so far as they differ from our own. What we believe and practise ourselves is, of course, Religion. It is in this loose sense that Tacitus uses the word *superstitio* when speaking of the Christians,[1] about whose beliefs and practices he knew nothing and cared less. It is in the same loose sense that the word is used to-day by professional writers and laymen alike.[2] Clinching the Latin term more closely, we find that it is derived from the verb *stare*, and that it is the exact equivalent of the English *survival*, the French *survivance*, and the German *Ueberbleibsel*. Nor is it at all necessary to suppose the Romans, when they coined their word, to have been interested in social anthropology. The attitude of mind receptive to Lucretius' great poem amply suffices; and the word appears to have originated, or at least received its current meaning, in Epicurean circles. However, even a translation of *superstitio* by *survival* does not lead us much further. The reason is that the concept of ' survival ' is too closely linked up with the cognate idea of ' progress ', which with the greatest difficulty admits of an objective definition. A survival in the last analysis may be almost anything. To the average American the British monarchy is a survival, and so is the papacy to the ordinary Protestant. One has tried to obtain a better criterion by having recourse to the science of anatomy which knows of certain organs no longer necessary for the living organism but ' survivals ' as it were from a former state of organic development, organs like the vermiform appendix, for example, or the muscle governing the motions of the ear. On that basis anything would have to be pronounced a survival that is found to be no longer a part of living and organic belief. However, if that basis is adopted, it is to be feared that more ' superstitions ' will be discovered going as strong as ever than we should like to assume or should be disposed to believe offhand. For example, would it be right to consider as ‘ dead ’ the belief that it is unlucky to set sail on a Friday or on the thirteenth day of the month, when no passenger liners will be seen leaving port on such a day ? And if such beliefs are excluded from the department of superstition, how are they to be classed ? Under religion ? I am afraid that most divines would object to such a classification. It will be best, then, to define as ‘ superstition ’ any belief or practice that is not recommended or enjoined by any of the great organized religions such as Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism. Even so, the dividing line will be sometimes difficult to draw, for it is well known that all the so-called higher religions have seen themselves obliged to admit and to tolerate a host of superstitious practices which are simply a heritage from the natural religions which preceded the great religious systems in every case. For the same reason, it will be readily seen, the roots of superstition are to a certain extent identical with the roots of religion ; that is, if one takes the latter term in its broadest sense.

Superstition as thus understood clearly comprises both beliefs and practices. For the sake of convenience the latter have been treated in a separate chapter. Again, to avoid too great a disproportion between this and other chapters, the superstitions connected with animals and plants have been treated under two headings of their own, entitled *Animal Lore* and *Plant Lore* respectively.

When Statius coined the verse which has remained famous ever since :

> Primus in orbe deos fecit timor

he was closer to the truth, the central root of all religion, than many students of this fascinating subject have been willing to admit. Had he said *religionem*, or some equivalent thereof, instead of *deos*, he would have been absolutely right. A good deal more than mere *timor* goes into the making of a god ; but religion—that is, the sum total of beliefs and practices in vogue before the great founders of the chief religious systems, the Jewish prophets, Buddha, Christ, and Mohammed, put the whole matter on a higher, that is, both more ethical and more philosophical basis—has its main root in fear. Nor is it advisable to use too much the term ‘ fear of the Unknown ’. The very concept implies a fairly high intellectual development. The modern intellectual may fear the Unknown ; the primitive does not, any more than a higher animal does. But if we substitute the term ‘ fear of the Abnormal ’, we come considerably nearer to the truth.

Man even in his early stages has a keen sense for the Normal and the Abnormal, though he is of course not aware of the logical distinction. The Normal will simply pass unnoticed; the Abnormal alone will attract attention. He shares this fundamental characteristic with the higher animals. Thus dogs have been seen to show a good deal of surprise mingled with fear on beholding an inanimate object move apparently without a cause. Accordingly, it is vain to expect, in a savage society, anything like a worship of the sun, the moon, or the stars. The importance of the sun is not realized until the agricultural stage has been reached; and whilst it is perfectly true that the moon impresses herself upon man's mind at an earlier period, she does so merely because she is found to be a useful tool in primitive time-reckoning; she is, in fact, man's first chronometer.[3] Much the same may be said about the constellations of the starry heavens, in spite of the thousand pretty myths current about them; underneath them all there is a solid base of practical utilitarianism. It is certain that neither sun nor moon would in itself arouse anything like what we are pleased to call a ' higher ' feeling. If the romantic fancies of the last century are misplaced anywhere, it is in precisely this domain, and before launching out on his preposterous theories on the rôle of the Dawn in early Aryan religion, Max Müller would have done well first to appreciate the basic truth underlying the little poem of his witty compatriot:

> Das Fräulein stand am Meere
> Und seufzte lang und bang,
> Es rührte sie so sehre
> Der Sonnenuntergang.
>
> Mein Fräulein! sei'n Sie munter,
> Das ist ein altes Stück;
> Hier vorne geht sie unter
> Und kehrt von hinten zurück.

The problem assumes an entirely different aspect the moment we pass from the normal course of the heavenly bodies to the phenomenon of an eclipse. The calculation of eclipses, as is well known, is an achievement of scientific mathematics and hence of civilization. The savage and barbarian is ignorant alike of their regularity and their causes. An eclipse therefore fills him with consternation. The facts are well known from the reports of historians and travellers. It is not astonishing that the rank and file of the Athenian army in Sicily should have shared this general fear; what does astonish is that this fear should have affected an Athenian general like Nikias, although it must be admitted that he was no intellectual. The current explanation is that the heavenly bodies are pursued by some fierce animal about to swallow them up, and it is thought incumbent upon man to frighten it away by making an infernal noise. The superstition, if not the practice, is well attested for Ancient Iceland no less than for Modern Mexico; and if the practice is not always mentioned by the reporters, the reason is that they had no chance of witnessing it or, more probable still, that the rite had died before the belief, a thing not at all uncommon.[4]

Another 'abnormal' phenomenon (except in certain equatorial regions) is thunder and lightning. Hence the multitude of superstitions connected with electric storms, hence also the multitude of thunder and lightning gods, which stand to the number of well-attested sun-gods in the proportion of ten to one. Of the nineteenth-century nature mythologists, those who emphasize the thunderstorm and lightning, as F. L. W. Schwartz,[5] for example, and in a certain measure also Adalbert Kuhn, were after all far more often in the right than were the sun mythologists of Max Müller's school.

One might be tempted to consider also the wind as such a phenomenon, that is to say, whenever it exceeds a certain 'normal' maximum of speed. Whether the Indians of the American Middle West, who were in the best possible position to develop a cyclone deity, ever went so far, we do not know. In Greece the rôle of wind-gods is about the smallest conceivable, and Roscher's attempt to establish Hermes as a wind-god must be regarded as a failure. But even the ancient Norwegians merely thought of the hurricane as produced by some gigantic bird sitting near the North Pole or thereabouts and flapping its wings, somewhat like the Lucifer of Dante's Hell. The reason for this comparative absence of the wind from the Olympi, both civilized and savage, is, first, the relative harmlessness of even a cyclone when it does not find much to destroy; second, the connexion which was no doubt always found to exist between the ordinary or 'normal' wind and the 'abnormal' one. A sudden storm might call for an aetiological myth—witness the giant bird of Norse mythology,—but it did not call for the invention of a wind-god.

What is true of hurricanes and cyclones is equally so of earthquakes. Mexico and Central America are the only countries, I believe, where an ancient earthquake-god is well attested, though the Greek Poseidon, too, had some such functions. Elsewhere we find aetiological stories, telling of a huge animal which carries the earth and which is in the vicious habit of changing its position once in a while.[6]

Before leaving the higher plane of the heavenly and atmospheric phenomena, let us drive home what has just been said by a familiar illustration showing in the best possible way the relatively late survival of that fear of the Abnormal. I refer to the widespread fear of comets,[7] which has not died down yet, and which is purely the result of the irregularity, i.e. abnormality, of the course of these bodies. Once they have been 'fixed' by modern astronomy and the beneficent result broadcast among the masses, that fear will disappear for good and all.

Stepping down to lower levels, the Abnormal may be observed quite distinctly and the fear attached to it aroused in precisely the same degree. One of the best instances that can be quoted in this connexion is the fear attached to twin births. The phenomenon had been observed in a rather sporadic fashion by several scholars, when Dr. Rendel Harris discovered the root and proceeded to trace that fear in all its ramifications from the beliefs of savage and barbarous races to the highest civilizations.[8] It is a curious fact, and certainly an excellent illustration of the truth of the old adage,

> A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country,

that his books have attracted less attention in Great Britain than anywhere else. Yet the fundamental facts admit of no doubt whatever. Twin-birth being an abnormality in the etymological sense of that word, it was considered with awe by peoples at a low stage of culture. The result was (and in many regions still is) that the twins, or the mother, or both, were destroyed, to avert the feared evil consequences from the community. The hut in which the birth had taken place, or in which the mother used to live, must be razed to prevent all contagion. Or, when it was thought that death alone would not wipe away the stain, or mayhap make matters worse, mother and children were exiled to some secluded spot inaccessible to others, as a rule some island. As a consequence, the place in question would become the refuge for numerous people who had good reason to be more afraid of the law or the avenger of blood than of twins; and thus arose a number of twin towns, the most famous of which is of course Rome itself, with a legend which still shows its origin as a twin sanctuary.

The execution of the cruel sentence passed against all twins would fall, in a matriarchal society, upon the uncle or, in case he was no longer living, upon the brother, of the unfortunate woman. Hence the large number of cruel uncles and great-uncles in twin legends all over the earth, from the Theban Lykos and the Roman Amulius to the Teutonic Ermanarich and his South American and Polynesian *pendants*. There is of course no need to suppose such legends to go back, individually, into prehistoric times, so far as Europe is concerned. It is sufficient to state that the epic formula in question arose as far back as to explain the curious survivals just noted ; once the formula existed, it could be used and worked up in many ways, so as to suit each individual need.

A faulty inference, but easy enough to understand, led to the assumption that twins had two different fathers, one being responsible for each. This assumption led to the further conclusion that the mother was guilty of adultery. The extant twin legends adopt the more charitable view that the father of one of the twins was a supernatural being, a god, that is, and sometimes the legend goes even so far as to assert that both twins have a divine father. Thus we have the divine origin of the twin Herakles, of the two Spartan and the two Messenian Dioscures, of the Moliones, of Pelias and Neleus, of Romulus and Remus, and so many others. One might be inclined to think that, this being so, prehistoric Mediterranean society dealt more charitably with the twins and their mother ; for as Molière puts it :

Un partage avec Jupiter
N'a rien du tout qui déshonore.

It would, however, be a fatal error to entertain any such illusion. At all events, the extant legends make it amply clear that the divine origin did not prevent Amphion and Zethus as well as Pelias and Neleus from being exposed, to say nothing of the Roman twins, and that the honour of being the wife of a divine husband did not protect Antiope and Tyro from ill-treatment and Rhea Silvia from a horrible death.

The Middle Ages did not take a more charitable view of the matter.

Onques ne fu ne ja nen iert
Ne n'avendra cele aventure
Qu'a une seule porteüre
Une fame deux enfanz ait,
Se deus home ne li ont fait.

These verses of an Old French poetess, probably a daughter of King Henry II, pretty well sum up mediaeval public opinion on this subject ; and legends reporting the exposure and ill-treatment of twins and their mother abound in Mediaeval Europe as they do in the Mediterranean countries of antiquity.

Nor does all this exhaust the subject. In fact, if one looked for any illustration of Statius' famous verse quoted above, the Heavenly Twins are there to furnish it. The twins, feared and persecuted as they were, enjoyed at the same time the signal honour of deification! The Spartan Dioscuri, Kastor and Pollux, are full-fledged gods, as are the Vedic Açvins, who have no other origin. As has been said, it would be difficult to hit upon a better example for the significant and all-important fact that Fear of the Abnormal is productive, not only of the darker superstitions, but of genuinely Olympian figures. One begins to understand why Dr. Harris's great discovery was not hailed in certain circles; the implications are altogether too dangerous.

Fear of the Abnormal is visible in still other ways at the birth of a human being. As is well known to any modern person conversant with medical facts, children will sometimes be born, if not with teeth, at least with certain horny ridges in the place of teeth. The phenomenon is rare enough to be classed as 'abnormal', and throughout Shakespeare's *King Richard III* it occurs as a sort of *leitmotiv*, the sorry hero being spoken of as

> That dog, that had his teeth before his eyes.

Many a primitive society would not think of giving such an infant a chance of growing up and becoming a Richard III; they would destroy it outright. The Shakespearean passage sufficiently shows how such beliefs lingered on down to comparatively modern times.

Abnormal also are albinos, and in savage societies all over the world they are not allowed to live. Again this superstition comes out in legend. I refer to the famous biography of Zal, the Iranian hero, as told in Firdousi's *Book of Kings* and by some Persian historians drawing on the same legendary material.[9]

Fear of the Abnormal is without question the basis of the curious position of idiots in primitive societies all over the globe. They are as a rule held in great veneration and regarded as prophets and seers. Their very idiocy, obviously a thing abnormal, inspires fear and obtains for them an amount of credit which normal people would not enjoy.[10] I take it that the brilliant careers of certain politicians, contemporaries of ours, are ultimately due to the same reasoning on the part of society.

Another bodily defect which was viewed in this light appears to have been blindness. At all events, it is curious to note the large number of blind seers in Ancient Greece: Kassandra, Helenos and, most famous of all, Teiresias. From seer to poet is not a great leap: the Latin *vates* and the Irish *fáith* may in fact be either. Accordingly, it is not surprising to find the number of blind seers excelled by that of blind poets. It is virtually certain also that blindness is apt to have for a consequence increased musical powers, the ear being the better developed, and this fact no doubt contributed to keep the blind in the calling into which a supernatural fear had first thrown them.[11]

Fear of the Abnormal is also at the bottom of the widespread belief in the evil eye. That this strange superstition had its origin in certain malformations of the human eye admits of no doubt.[12] By extension the disastrous effect was later also attributed to eyes in which no such defect was noticeable. Yet it is significant that in the Mediterranean countries the evil eye is as a rule a blue eye, whilst in the North of Europe it is associated with black eyes. The inference is clear, I believe.

Fear of the Abnormal lurks behind the aversion for red hair.

> Rotes Haar und Elsenholz
> Wächst auf keinem guten Boden,

says the German proverb, and it stands to reason that the aversion did not arise among Irish or Jewish people. The adage reflects merely the feeling of the ordinary Teuton when he faced his Celtic neighbour and enemy or the Jewish tradesman who inhabited the ghetto of his cities.[13]

The same fear inspires the well-known aversion for persons in any way disfigured, lame people, for example. ‘ Sieh dich vor vor denen, die Gott gezeichnet hat,’ i.e., Look out for those marked by God. The Jewish dictum, *The blind and the lame shall not come into the house*, attested at a very early time, and referred to above, bears out the same view-point. It is needless to say that such an attitude of society must have reacted most unfavourably on the individuals so punished, and would often enough make them outright mischievous and malevolent, even if they had not been so before. In Ancient Scandinavia a person whose eyebrows were grown together over his nose was regarded as uncanny ; in Continental Europe he was suspected of being a werewolf ; in the Balkans he is still apt to be feared as a vampire after his death.

Nor is this fear limited to abnormalities among human beings. Says the mill-servant Luke, speaking of lop-eared rabbits :

> Things out o’ natur niver thrive : God A’mighty doesn’t like ’em. He made the rabbits’ ears to lie back, an’ it’s nothin’ but contrairiness to make ’em hing down like a mastiff dog’s.

A rooster crowing in the afternoon is a very bad omen, and so is a crowing hen :

> A whistling maid and a crowing hen
> Is good to neither God nor man,

a saw which is matched by the German :

> Den Mädchen, die da pfeifen, und den Hühnern, die da krähen, denen muss man bei Zeiten den Hals umdrehen.

It is hardly necessary to add that the very term ' abnormal ' must be taken in a relative, not an absolute, sense. In other words, what is normal for one class of people may not be at all so for another. Hence the well-known reference, in *Cyrano de Bergerac*, to the silent and prudent Gascon. The basic idea is very old, and one of the quaintest instances occurs in Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*, where it is said of the Anglo-Saxon king Oswin that he was too humble a king to live long ; and really, he was slain shortly after. The passage in question reads like mordant irony, and yet the author certainly had no such purpose in mind.[14]

Several of the examples illustrating the Fear of the Abnormal are omens, and omens in general loom large in Superstition, the more so because all the higher religions have more or less frowned upon the practice of divination and the observation of omens.

> There shall not be found among you any one . . . that useth divination . . .

is the rule laid down by the Deuteronomic law, clearly repudiating in this case beliefs and practices quite common among the ancient Israelites and even sanctioned by the pre-prophetic faith. Christianity and Islam have here, as elsewhere, followed Deuteronomy, and in Dante's Hell soothsayers are atrociously punished by having their faces turned back. In spite of all this, divination has flourished in all ages, and is doing so even now, under the cover of the higher religious systems.

Omens may be roughly divided into two classes, such as were incorporated in some religious system (though not in any of the higher ones just referred to) and such as did not have that advantage, if this term may be used. To the former class belong ornithomancy, haruspicy, incubation, kledonomancy, hydromancy, and a few others, with, most important of all, perhaps, astrology.[15] Among the latter must be reckoned common superstitions such as the various inferences drawn from the first person or animal one meets when setting out on some journey. It is clear, of course, that even the omens of the former class were not ' invented ' by some priesthood. That priesthood, if it had any share at all (which was not always the case), merely developed omens of the second class. This is definitely known to have been the case for ornithomancy and kledonomancy. At the most it can be said of astrology that its origins were ' learned ', though the belief in the influence of the stars upon natural phenomena is world-wide and the whole vast system of Babylonian astrology no doubt had its root in primitive thinking. On the other hand, the very existence of a system of augury among the Romans, for example, undoubtedly contributed to the strengthening of the superstition in question among the populations of the Mediterranean basin. Thus it had an astonishing hold in Spain and Southern France throughout the Middle Ages. The *Poema de Mío Cid* does not scruple to narrate how its hero paid attention to the croakings of the crow, and the oldest Italian collection of *novelle* describes an Aragonese or Provençal nobleman, ' like most of his countrymen,' addicted to practices of augury.[16]

Haruspicy (from Assyr. *har* = ' liver ') has never been popular in Europe ; the reason is that this pseudo-science, of Babylonian origin and carried west by the Etruscans, was entirely in the hands of a priesthood. Yet divination from shoulder-blades or the ' wishbone ' of fowls is one of the popular superstitions of Europe, whatever its origin.

Somewhat similar is the history of the birth omens, a pseudo-science highly developed in ancient Mesopotamia.[17] For their existence in Europe we have no direct evidence ; but the curious Roman names such as *Dentatus*, *Agrippa* (a child born with his feet foremost), *Caesar*, etc., and the Roman habit of calling children *Quintus*, *Sextus*, *Decimus*, harking back to a time when each child was given a name in the chronological order of its arrival, make it appear extremely likely that birth omens were taken, once upon a time, also in Italy. It was perhaps the Etruscans who had carried the superstition to the European West.

As a sort of birth omens must be classed certain practices of divination to discover the new-born child's future profession, though in most European countries they have lately fallen somewhat into desuetude. To show what I mean I can do no better than quote the rather facetious anecdote told by German-speaking Bohemians of their Czech neighbours. To a baby are held out at the same time a fiddle and a purse. If it grasps the fiddle it will become a musician, if the purse, a pickpocket. I suspect that the story was originally reported of the wandering Gipsies and only later attributed to a sedentary population of agriculturists such as the Czechs, out of the well-known friendly feeling of good neighbourliness which has always characterized the European nations.

A similar type of oracle, though hardly a birth omen, was practised (and mayhap still is) in certain Eastern States of the Union. A Dutchman of the State of New York is thus reported to have left on a table a purse, a Bible, and a bottle of whisky, and then to have watched from a hiding-place the attitude of his son, a promising lad of fifteen. 'If he takes the purse,' the old man thought, 'he will be a financier; if the Bible, a minister; if the bottle, an idler and a drunkard.' The son duly entered, put the purse in his pocket, sat down on the Bible, and sampled the bottle. 'Good heavens,' the old man exclaimed, 'he will be a politician.'

The practice of incubation was widespread in antiquity, not only in the Roman Empire but in Ancient Ireland as well.[18] The introduction of Christianity did not put any stop to it; instead of sleeping in pagan temples people now did so in Christian churches, with the same effect. As a divinatory rite incubation is found among many savage tribes. The sleeper is merely given a drug, after which he is believed to have the illuminating dream. Nor has the practice died out in modern times. There are many concoctions of herbs and flowers, to be put under the pillow, credited with a like power.

Kledonomancy was known both in Ancient Greece and Italy. In the Middle Ages the Arabs were addicted to it on a large scale, calling it *fal*, under which name it is still known in North Africa. They appear to have carried it to Spain, if it is permissible to draw such an inference from the Spanish word *arfil* (from *al-fil*).[19]

Hydromancy is closely connected with the worship of wells and sacred springs. It is well attested both for Celtic and Teutonic antiquity.

Astrology, for obvious reasons, has never been able to deny its learned origin. Although the number of 'planetary books' current among the people and sold at fairs is certainly large enough, it is astonishing to note their conservatism. The books reveal essentially the same axioms and reasonings which made up ancient astrology and which were still believed in in Cromwell's time.

Much the same state of things holds true for the so-called dream-books as popular now as they ever were. Still, on comparing them with the work of Artemidorus, one finds practically the same material with identical interpretations.

A precursor of modern spiritism is the practice commonly known under the name of *necromancy*, a word which in the original Greek simply designated a mode of divination by means of the spirits of the departed but which, after going through an Arabic medium, came to mean, in Mediaeval Europe, the sum total of the magic arts. The oldest known example is of course the *Nekyia* of the *Odyssey*, but the practice did not by any means die out in later Greece; witness the famous episode of the Thessalian witch in Lucan's *Pharsalia*. Nor was it limited to the classical peoples. The episode of the Witch of Endor, Othin's conjuration of the dead *völva* in the Norse *Vǫluspá*, and a similar story forming part of the *Hervarar Saga* pretty well prove the ubiquity of the practice. Nor does it call for any special explanation, the basis being simply the common human notion that the dead know more than the living, and for obvious reasons.

In contrast to these superstitions which, though clearly a heritage from the upper strata of society, are none the less extremely popular, stand the numerous bits of lore having reference to the first person or animal met with on leaving the house. An old woman means ill luck, undoubtedly because of the idea of sterility connected with her person. This aversion is apt to be extended to the whole fair sex, irrespective of age, when the man is setting out on a hunting or fishing expedition. The idea behind it is no doubt the division of labour between the sexes characteristic of savage and barbaric societies. It is deemed unlucky if a woman meddles with the affairs of men, or vice versa.[20] The underlying idea of sterility is at the bottom of the aversion against meeting a priest. The priest of the Church in Old Irish is the ' weak man ' ; encountering him when engaged in a manly pursuit, such as fishing or the chase, forebodes no good. Curiously enough, in Protestant countries this aversion was transferred to the Protestant minister, although obviously the very reason responsible for the superstition no longer exists. In the Protestant Hebrides it is even undesirable to mention the very word ' minister ', or its Celtic equivalent.

The various superstitions connected with the encounter with animals, especially wolf or hare, had best be treated under the heading of *Animal Lore*, since they cannot properly be separated from the qualities with which popular belief credits those animals.

The various ' love oracles ' current in Europe, now as they have always been, are rites rather than mere beliefs. Yet mention must be made of the widespread superstition that by watching at the village church on certain nights of the year, as a rule on New Year's Eve, it is possible to see a procession of the ' doubles ' or ' shadows ' of the persons destined to die before another year has run its course. There is a gruesome story connected with this belief ; the curious man beholds his own double in the ghostly procession and dies from fright. If one bears in mind how large a play is given to an over-excited imagination, it must be conceded that a story of this type may be based upon actual fact, though once the type existed it no doubt spread by migration.

Closely analogous is the popular belief, by no means limited to these islands, that in the night before Christmas at midnight the domestic animals obtain the power of human speech and are able to foretell future events. The story which grew out of this belief narrates how a peasant overhears his animals at the critical time prophesying his own death. The effect this makes upon him is the same as in the previous tale type.

In the same night, at the stroke of midnight, it is also believed that all the water in the wells is transformed into wine. Yet the rash person who would take advantage of this with a view to reducing his wine-bill, or (in New England) to violating the Volstead Act, will come to no good end.

There are various beliefs of a divinatory nature connected with mirrors. The person bold enough to gaze in the mirror at certain times, for the purpose of beholding future events, will see the Devil in person and grow mad in consequence.[21]

Intimately connected with the belief in omens are the various superstitions attached to certain numbers. A few of these are very old indeed. Thus for example the frequent occurrence of the number nine in folk-traditions is ultimately a consequence of the sacredness of that number. The ancient week, the lunar week, counted the nights, not the days, and the first night was included in the counting as in Roman times. This much may be granted to the moon mythologists. Yet it is equally certain that in a number of cases, perhaps even a majority of all, nine owes its conspicuous rôle to the simple fact that it is the square of three. This conclusion is corroborated by the significant fact that the number twenty-seven enjoys a certain popularity, especially in Ireland, a fact due to a simple process of multiplication, nine times three. Why three should have acquired its prominence all over the globe is not so clear. What is certain is only that in resuscitation legends it plays the rôle it does by analogy with the number of nights the moon is invisible every month. The evil reputation attached to the number thirteen is attributed by M. Salomon Reinach to the gospel narrative of the last supper. The argument is not quite convincing. As is well known, of a party of thirteen one is generally supposed to die before the year is over ; according to the gospel narrative it is two who die. Moreover, it is hazardous to separate the number thirteen from the number twelve ; yet the latter was prominent in folk-lore long before Christ.[22] Whether the number seven owes its prominence to the seven planets, as is often supposed, is on the whole rather doubtful. What is certain is that it is found even among peoples and civilizations completely ignorant of the planetary system.[23] The number forty has a certain importance in Semitic, Greek and Slavonic folk-lore. No doubt some of the cases in question go back to its occurrence in the Old Testament. Yet its rôle there has not yet been satisfactorily explained.[24]

Various superstitions (though by no means all) are connected with sneezing.[25] The very custom of saying ' God bless you ' is an outgrowth of the savage belief that at sneezing there is a danger of the soul's escaping from the body for good and all. Yet a number of other curious beliefs are not quite so clear. The current idea that the sneezing of a person testifies to the truth of a statement which has just been made by one of the circle cannot be logically separated from the ancient assumption that a ray of lightning or a thunderclap foreboded the granting of a prayer. The explanation, that it was simply Jove's answer, has all the earmarks of an aetiological tale.

Numerous superstitions are connected with purely subjective phenomena such as the hiccough, the ringing of the ears, etc. The usual assertion is that they are phenomena falling within the domain of mental telepathy. Their purely subjective character does not admit of an easy verification and, the whole subject being at the time of this writing almost entirely in the hands of professional quacks, will not do so for some time to come. A *non liquet* is therefore the only scientific answer that can be given.

Equally important but hitherto quite obscure are the beliefs which go under the name of ' second sight ' in this country,[26] under those of *intersignes* and *Vorspuk* in France and Germany respectively. What is meant is simply the faculty of beholding future events as in a vision or day-dream. To laugh them out of existence is not only thoroughly unscientific but reflects little honour on the folklorist and the man of breeding, whose maxim should be

> Homo sum, humani nil mihi alienum puto.

It is ardently to be hoped that future scientific investigations will furnish some acceptable explanation.

Such an explanation has been given (though it fails to explain *all* cases) for the nature of dreams. The concept of the ' subconscious mind ', though at present little more than a scientific term, affords a good working hypothesis for the explanation of dream phenomena, though here as elsewhere what is really new about this much trumpeted discovery of a certain modern pseudo-science is but the scientific jargon.

Decidedly on the border-line of popular superstitions and psychic experiences stands the widespread belief that a dying man is endowed with a prophetic gift and able to foretell the future. Connected with this belief is the assumption that the blessing and curse of a dying person are all the more effective. Whether such beliefs have their sole cause in the mysterious character of the phenomenon of death or whether in some individuals at least, when their mental powers are unimpaired, the intellect, before going out like a dying candle, in a last flicker as it were and with a tension of its whole mechanism, is capable of visions not given to it at ordinary moments, we have no means of telling. Yet it is astonishing to note the frequent occurrence of precisely this motive in the literatures of the world. The dying dragon of Thebes (the heavenly voice in Ovid, *Metem.*, III, 97, seems to be a rationalizing feature) foretells to his slayer Kadmos his own end and metamorphosis. In no other manner the Norse dragon Fafnir prophesies the future to the young Sigurd. The glorious vision of the dying Attinghausen in Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell* will come to mind, and in the *Iliad* the dying Hector prophesies the death of his conqueror.

A very peculiar and at the time of this writing quite unexplained superstition (or mental phenomenon) is the belief that certain dying persons were seen, at the very time of their death, at a considerable distance by individuals who had no knowledge whatever of their death or illness As is well known, Walter Scott made use of this notion in his *Bride of Lammermoor*, but it finds quite as much expression in a considerable number of local legends hailing from all over Europe.

From omens to apotropaeic remedies, i.e. remedies for the aversion of evil, it will be seen to be an easy transition. No doubt, such remedies are quite as old as are omens. One of the foremost is the human spittle ; hence the custom of spitting to avert an evil omen, a custom well attested for classical antiquity. The origin of the superstition is by no means definitely known. If I may venture an hypothesis it is this. The human spittle has, as is well known, the properties of an enzyme, that is, it will bring about fermentation, for which reason spittle was extensively used in primitive brewing. From this characteristic it was possible to infer that it was ' ein ganz besondrer Saft ' and to ascribe to it virtues useful and effective in the aversion of demonic powers.[27]

What is true of the spittle is still more so of blood,[28] whether human or animal. Its apotropaeic powers are as old as, and probably older than, those of spittle. A witch is rendered harmless if one manages to draw a few drops of blood from her body. A metamorphosed person, a werewolf, for example, will regain his or her former shape by the same radical means. Nor is it possible to separate from this set of beliefs the supposed curative virtue of human blood, which led to the ghastly belief that leprosy could be cured if the patient took a bath in it. For fairly obvious reasons the blood of young children was again believed to be the most efficacious. Stories having reference to this gruesome superstition abound, and it would be bold to assert that in a number of instances they are not based upon hard and cold facts. A similar notion is at the bottom of the horrible belief that fresh human blood can cure certain diseases, notably epilepsy, a belief which was responsible for truly horrible scenes all over Europe so long as public executions were still in vogue. Related notions gave the public executioner a certain reputation of medical knowledge, though it must be admitted that in the nature of things hangmen must have possessed a certain insight into human anatomy which it was certainly difficult to obtain in medical schools, at least so long as the Church frowned upon the dissection of corpses.

The belief that the blood of a slain tribesman (there has never been any serious objection to killing the ‘ damned foreigner ’ of American parlance) cried out against his slayer and, if unavenged, would exact dire penalties from the community, first led to the disapproval of such bloodshed; and the fear of the menstrual blood established the first taboos regulating the relation of the sexes, incidentally contributing most powerfully to establishing their inequality, an injustice which modern politicians, with the facility peculiar to this class of human benefactors, will right by the simple process of passing a few Bills. Community of blood established relationship ; hence the possibility of adopting foreigners into the tribe by the ceremony of the blood covenant,[29] hence also the union of this rite with the other marriage ceremonies in cases of an exogamic marriage system.[30] Hence also the necessity of a drop of blood in place of ink for the signature of the so-called devil's pact. The mysterious power of blood also necessitated certain purificatory rites even when the person slain was a foreigner and an enemy. Hence the Roman ceremony of the ‘ yoke ’,[31] hence the taboo clinging to trophies, hence also the various lustration rites in Ancient Greece and Rome.

The attribution of the same apotropaeic power to excrements of the human organism is responsible for certain superstitions and practices current among criminals, who believe themselves safe from detection if they defile the scene of their operations before leaving it.

Apotropaeic power is naturally thought to reside in certain plants and the drugs extracted from them. They will be treated in a subsequent chapter. Of a more simple nature is the use of various gestures supposed to counteract evil influences, especially those of the evil eye. Such gestures are, for example, those of the 'fig' and the 'horn', both still common in Southern Europe. The former is essentially obscene and based upon the belief that the sexual organs, the seat of fertility, are sufficiently powerful to repel all attacks of the demonic powers.[32]

Demonic influence and the fear of their mischief is also at the base of the importance attributed by Superstition to Time.

> Mein Sohn, nichts in der Welt ist unbedeutend.
> Das erste aber und hauptsächlichste
> Bei allem ird'schen Ding ist Ort und Stunde,

says Seni in *Wallenstein*; nor would it be correct to associate this attitude always with astrology. On the contrary, the belief that certain days and seasons are lucky and others less so is far older than the observation of the stars. The most obvious consequence of such beliefs is the establishment of *dies nefasti* as we know them from the Roman calendar. The Romans had the ingenious, or perhaps rather naïve, idea of calling *dies religiosi* the days of their catastrophic defeats, from the battle of the Allia to those of Cannae, Carrhae and the annihilation of Varus. Yet this is merely the *laicization* of a sacred custom far older than the Roman Republic. Nor is it in any way peculiar to the Romans. The Jewish sabbath has no other origin [33]; if a more ethical meaning was given to it in after-times, this was merely putting new wine into old bottles, and the Puritanical Sunday has all the characteristics of a *dies religiosus*. *Dies religiosi* were also the three days August 24th, October 5th, and November 8th, when the netherworld (*mundus*) was believed to stand open. It is logical, perhaps, to reserve for the dead in general the last part of the ordinary year; hence the gloomy character of the Roman *February* (the last month of the old Roman year) and its close parallel in Vedic India,[34] hence also the reservation for the dead of the last Sunday of the ecclesiastical year in Protestant Germany. The feast of All Souls took the place of a pre-Christian feast devoted to the ancestral ghosts, and in Celtic Europe this day is still teeming with pagan superstitions, all of a gloomy character.

Exactly why the month of May assumed the gloomy reputation it had in Roman times, and partly still has, is not known; but the superstition has survived to this day even in parts of Europe where the Romans never set foot. The unlucky May bride is proverbially known. Yet it is to be noted that in parts of Ireland the superstition in question does not appear to exist; witness the Irish popular song:

If ever I get married it's in the month of May,
When the fields they are green and the meadows they are gay,
When my true love and I can sit sport and play
All alone on the banks of the roses.

With the introduction of the Alexandrian week it was inevitable that certain days, or at least one day, should acquire the character of a *dies nefastus.* Why it was that Friday was chosen widely, though by no means universally, is not known. The most plausible explanation connects this character of the day with the Passion.

If the idea of *dies fasti*, *nefasti* and *religiosi* must be classed as irrational, such is not the case for the sum total of beliefs called by the general name of weather-lore.[35] These beliefs are ultimately based upon careful observation by generations of agriculturists. If some of them strike us as irrational, or if contradictory weather rules are found in different parts of Europe, the reason is that the reform of the calendar has upset many an ancient rule, and the differences of climate between the Baltic and the North Sea on the one hand and the Mediterranean on the other are fairly considerable, so that a rule which holds true for Great Britain might not be true at all for France.

Weather-lore was, in the olden times, handed down orally from generation to generation. At all events, the use of printed almanacs, now prevalent in certain parts of Europe and all over agricultural America, is a comparatively recent innovation. The weather-rules, the better to be remembered, were usually put in verse form. Many of these, in their present shape, are probably not very old; yet it stands to reason that even in that case they merely took the place of older ones. The idea of weather-lore, or calendar lore, is certainly older than Hesiod, whose work is full of quaint rules belonging to this class.

For purposes of illustration I wish to quote a few English weather-rules. A full moon about Christmas Day is considered unlucky, hence the saying:

Light Christmas, light wheatsheaf,
Dark Christmas, heavy wheatsheaf.

To hop-farming refers the saw:

Till St. James's Day be come and gone
There may be hops, or there may be none.

A rule enjoining the cutting of thistles, a noisome weed, says:

Cut your thistles before St. John,
You will have two instead of one.

That is, after July 24th the thistles will be ripe and, if not cut before, will scatter their seeds over the farm-land. The moon is credited, probably rightly, with having a special power over the plants; hence the rule:

> Sow peas and beans in the wane of the moon,
> Who soweth them sooner, he soweth too soon,
> That they with the planet may rest and rise,
> And flourish with bearing, most plentiful-wise.

Another rule enjoins:

> When the sloe tree is as white as a sheet
> Sow your barley whether it be dry or wet,

and another:

> When the oak puts on his gosling grey,
> 'Tis time to sow barley night or day,

and yet another:

> When the elmen leaf is as big as a mouse's ear,
> Then to sow barley never fear.
> When the elmen leaf is as big as an ox's eye,
> Then say I, 'Hie, boys, hie.'

An American variant of this rhyme penetrated even among the Indians of Pennsylvania, who say that when the leaf of the white oak is as large as a mouse's ear it is time to plant maize.[36]

The trees generally are indicative of the weather to come:

> If the oak is out before the ash,
> 'Twill be a summer of wet and splash;
> But if the ash is before the oak,
> 'Twill be a summer of fire and smoke,

which is matched almost exactly by the German

> Treibt die Esche vor der Eiche,
> Hält der Sommer grosse Bleiche;
> Treibt die Eiche vor der Esche,
> Hält der Sommer grosse Wäsche.

Another saw of the same type reads:

> Onion's skin very thin,
> Mild winter's coming in;
> Onion's skin thick and tough,
> Coming winter cold and rough.

Some of these rules are of a certain antiquity. For example, the rule

> Make the vine poor, and it will make you rich,

and

> Short boughs, long vintage.

go back to a time when the vine was still cultivated in England. Still more peculiar is the saw: If there are no kegs or seeds in the ash-trees, there will be no king within the twelvemonth. As it happens, there are always kegs, and the proverb thus merely testifies to the permanency of Monarchy in England. Yet it is certainly curious that the time-limit of a year should be set. May it hark back to the well-known institution of the yearly king?

Weather-lore owes its existence chiefly, of course, to the importance of the weather in farm life. By an extension of ideas, natural enough, it was connected also with human affairs, and various omens and portents were drawn from the weather as it happens to be on certain decisive occasions. Thus rain during a wedding ceremony is considered an ill omen in many regions. In others, however, it is considered the reverse, betokening fertility. Similarly the weather is observed at funerals. Rain generally indicates that the corpse is 'blessed'; and a Mediaeval Icelandic story relates how a good man whose funeral was accompanied by storm was rewarded with eternal bliss, whilst his wicked wife, in spite of the lovely sunshine on the day of her funeral, fared quite differently in the other world.[37] On the other hand, I heard a story in the Rhine country telling of an old usurer whose corpse was carried off by a sudden flood. The underlying idea evidently is that the wicked man was not to enjoy a burial in holy ground which his money had bought for him.

This order of ideas leads us to the numerous superstitions clinging to the Threshold Rites or Rites of the Way, as they have been called from the French *Rites du Passage* of M. Van Gennep.[38] The rites themselves will be duly discussed in a subsequent chapter; yet some of the superstitions require a note here.

The phenomenon of birth carries with it the idea of the ceremonially unclean; hence the numerous precautions and taboos to be observed until the mother's *Churching*, that is, her first appearance at church. Under the same trend of ideas both mother and child are believed to be particularly exposed to the attack of demons; hence the precaution of having a burning candle by the bedside, fire being a well-known *apotropaion*. The *Changeling* superstition [39] derived a good deal of its support from this very fear. The practice of putting new-born children on the fire, of which the Greek *ἀμφιδϱόμια* is but an offshoot,[40] and the corresponding rite, in which water is credited with having the beneficent effects attributed to fire in the previous one, a rite which is the direct precursor of the Christian baptism, are but other forms taken on by the same set of primitive notions. A host of superstitions are connected with the giving of the name, an all-important event and bound to be of the most far-reaching consequences. Often, as with the Ancient Babylonians and, probably, also with the Etruscans and Romans, special birth omens were taken and decided the name of the child. If children previously born had died shortly after their birth, the evil demons, always believed to be rather stupid, will be deceived by an ill-sounding or an animal name being given to the last child. If thus, for example, Saxo Grammaticus relates how two royal children to escape persecution were given dogs' names by their protector and guardian, to put off the pursuers, we are reminded of the Yakut custom of calling a child whose elder brothers had died, *It-ohoto*, that is, ' puppy ', to save it from the imaginary persecution of the demons of disease.

A similar set of ideas is no doubt at the bottom of the curious Thracian custom, reported by Herodotus with a whole string of philosophical considerations certainly very far from the minds of those rude Balkan people, of weeping aloud at the birth of a child. The custom has analogues on the other side of the European Continent, where it is reported of the Celts.[41]

The next ' critical ' period of human life (in more ways than one) coincides with the human marriage, which in consequence teems with all sorts of odd superstitions and the corresponding customs. Suffice it to mention the widespread belief that the partner who falls asleep first, on the wedding night, will be the first to die. Similarly at funerals certain omens are drawn from the aspect of the corpse and from other accidental circumstances, referring not only to the hypothetic future of the deceased but, more realistically, to the future of the living members of the community.

The superstitions connected with the dead may take two chief forms, both of which are found in present-day Europe. The dead man may appear as a vampire or as a ghost. The former, the belief in the ' living corpse ', is the older of the two and is now common mainly in Slavonic Europe and in Greece. In the Middle Ages it was quite current also in Iceland.[42] The belief in ghosts presupposes the animistic stage of religious development. It is common especially in Western and Central Europe. Mediaeval Iceland knew both vampires and ghosts.

The ghost is practically always what the French call an *âme en peine*, as may be seen from Shakespeare's famous lines:

> If there be any good thing to be done,
> That may to thee do ease, and grace to me,
> Speak to me.
>
> . . . .
>
> Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life
> Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,
> For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,
> Speak of it.

That is, the ghost is supposed to be condemned to do penance for some particular crime (not necessarily a very serious one) by haunting the place of his former abode. Stories will relate how by certain actions on the part of the living, often the ghost's own descendants, he may be redeemed. Sometimes the method of redemption is very simple and essentially verbal. Ghosts as guardians of treasure are very common throughout Europe, and the tale will attempt to explain the connexion of treasure and ghost. The lore connected with ghostly apparitions is rather considerable; and it is to be suspected that poets, known as well as unknown, had as much of a hand in its making as old Homer had in the making of the Olympians. This is true of Shakespeare's ghosts no less than of Dickens's.

Thus the lights will burn dim at the approach of a spectre, which will always be visible to animals, even when it is not visible to man. The dogs will howl as it passes by, and horses will stop when encountering one on the road. It will pass without difficulty through doors and gates, shut and bolted though they are. Often it is deemed dangerous to address it or even to respond to a call or a question. A learned man and a scholar has a better chance in dealing with it than an ordinary person (the idea behind all exorcisms). Its grip is most dangerous and must be avoided. If it offers its hand, it is wise to present a stick, which will be found burned afterwards. A strict time limit is set to its appearance. At cock-crow it must flit back to its infernal abode, alike in this to all creatures of the Great Beyond. The origin of this set of beliefs cannot be discussed here. In so far as it is simply one of the many manifestations of animism, it belongs to the History of Religion; in so far as it may be based upon purely mental phenomena, it falls within the purview of the Natural Sciences.

The vampire has received a certain amount of notice in a previous chapter. It differs fundamentally from ghosts in that its appearance is purely physical. Thus it will not flit through gates and doors, but at its approach the latter will fly open to let it pass. Nor can it be exorcised in the manner of ghosts. A more radical and likewise purely physical labour is required to lay a vampire, of which more anon. In all other respects its manifestations are not sensibly different from those attributed to ghosts. Nor is it always easy to draw the line between the two. If for example we hear that a ghost has been ' killed,' we may assume that that ' ghost ' was originally a vampire. It is only vampires, not ghosts, who have to fear a second death here on earth.

To the category of ghosts, not of vampires, belong the superstitions centring in the ' Flying Dutchman '.[43] In considering this and related beliefs one must subtract first of all the creations of the Romantic Movement, of Heinrich Heine and Richard Wagner, to say nothing of the curious novel of Captain Marryat. The kernel of the legend bears on its face the history of Holland's glorious past, and thus dates back to the seventeenth century. Antiquity and the Middle Ages knew no ghostly vessels. Its origin must be sought in an aerial reflection commonly known under the name of *Fata Morgana*.

Another peculiar belief, or rather, set of beliefs, usually classed under Animism, is connected with the idea of a person's ' double '. There can be little doubt that the notion goes back to certain psychic phenomena by no means unknown to medical science. From this simple and as it were ' neutral ' concept to the attribution to it of the qualities of a protecting divinity, a guardian angel, it is not a far cry ; and accordingly we note that this step was taken by many peoples in the most widely separated regions of our globe. Where dualism prevailed, as it did in Persia, one naturally assumed the existence of even two such ' doubles ', a good and an evil companion, held accountable for an individual's good and evil thoughts, his good and evil actions, an idea which, for didactic purposes no doubt, was taken over into Christianity and Islam.[44] By a still further extension, to a whole group of individuals, a family or dynasty, and even a whole nation, might be ascribed such a guardian spirit. Thus we hear in the old Icelandic documents that the ' good spirits ' of the land were frightened by the dragon's heads fastened to the prow of viking ships,[45] and the ' genius ' of the Emperor and of Rome was a very real and very important concept from the time of Augustus on. The Latin name implies that this ' double ' could be associated with the powers of generation. The Norse *Fylgia* could, and often enough did, appear in animal shape, usually giving warning in a dream. Yet in Iceland, too, we meet with the notion that the

Fylgia was of necessity of the opposite sex to the owner, a notion which seems to underlie the Norse story of Helgi and Kara and of the Persian *Fravashi*. It is an open question how far such ideas contributed to the making of the Norse Valkyries and the immortal virgins of Mohammed's warriors' paradise.

For a fairly obvious reason the 'double' or 'soul' was often identified with the shadow; hence the various superstitions connected with the shadow of human beings. For example, if caught on the site of a building the foundations of which are being laid, it is believed to suffice for a foundation sacrifice: the person to whom it belongs will die in the course of the year. Hence also the curious belief that a person who for one reason or another has sold his soul to the Evil One will at the same time lose his shadow, a belief which comes out in the Swedish legend of Anna, immortalized by Lenau, where the heroine, after having caused herself to be made sterile by magic means, thereby loses her shadow. Yet its most perfect expression in literature is found in the lovely and deeply tragic tale *Peter Schlemihl*, though to be sure the poet has filled the old frame with a new content; the man without a shadow is none other than the man who has lost his country, in this case Chamisso himself. For it is with one's country, alas, very much as it is with one's shadow, which one may despise and make little of, in hours of discouragement and despair, for its hundred little incongruities and stupidities, and yet, on second thought, one cannot but realize how by a thousand invisible roots one remains attached to its soil, as indeed one remains attached to one's shadow.[46] Adalbert von Chamisso might well have said what a poet greater than he put in verse about a quarter of a century later:

> Mancher leider wurde lahm
> Und nicht mehr nach Hause kam—
> Streckt verlangend aus die Arme,
> Dass der Herr sich sein erbarme.

Of a different order, and most of them no doubt of a venerable age, is a set of beliefs which for want of a better name might be called 'household superstitions'. Hesiod knows a number, and to judge from more recent collections, they have not died out to any appreciable degree. To mention a few: it is deemed unlucky to spill salt, the consequence being a domestic quarrel. The bread-knife must not be put on the table with its blade upward: the poor souls might hurt themselves. For the same reason the poker must not be left on or near the hearth burning hot. Pythagoras lifted a number of these into his religious system, for reasons which we do not know and can at the most only surmise. But some of the antiquarians of late antiquity, removed from the living superstitions of the peasant class, were sorely puzzled thereby, and their ingenious attempts at various explanations betray their ignorance. Nor is it quite fair to smile at them. We should ourselves be hard put to it were we compelled to explain the genuine origin of such beliefs, for what is said about the ' poor souls ' is merely aetiological fable.

Moderns may well shrug their shoulders at prohibitions of this type; they have, however, played their part in the history of ethics. For it is a fact which deserves a little pondering that all ethical codes have their beginnings in prohibitions such as these. Without Pythagoras and his fancies it would be difficult to imagine Plato and Aristotle; and the present form of the *Decalogue*, antiquated and insufficient as it is, is yet vastly more ethical than its more primitive version which still shines through, like the first handwriting of a palimpsest, in the extant text of the Mosaic Law.

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CHAPTER XII

PLANT LORE

HUMAN life is almost everywhere on this globe interwoven with, and to a great extent dependent upon, plant life. At all events, were the terrestrial vegetation for some reason or other to disappear, man would immediately be doomed to an existence little better than that of the Eskimos or the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego. Botany is a relatively modern invention, and at that limited to the understanding of the happy few. Thus it is not surprising that before the scientific mode of looking at plant life, and side by side with it, there should go a more humble discipline, if this fairly pretentious name may safely be given to a set of beliefs or superstitions held by man on the subject of the vegetable kingdom.

One of the most outstanding of these facts, if not the most outstanding, is the attribution of animistic qualities to plants. It would seem that in the animistic stage of religious development Life is synonymous with Spirit, and Spirit is more or less of a reflection of the human psyche. When Animism had reached the stage of the anthropomorphic divinities the tree-spirit naturally became a dryad or a hamadryad in Greece, a forest woman (Moosweiblein) in the North.[1] This development is, however, not the only one possible. Equally remarkable is the identification of the plant spirit with the soul of a deceased ancestor. The dolorous meeting of Aeneas with Polydorus in the third book of the *Aeneid* perhaps affords the best illustration.[2] By a restriction not at all uncommon in this domain the belief was later narrowed down to the souls of suicides, and thus we find the Theban legend, recounted by Pausanias, of the suicide Menoeceus whose soul went into a pomegranate tree growing on his tomb. The ancient legend of Phyllis, who slew herself and was changed into an almond tree, belongs to the same group. This story, as told by Servius in his Vergil commentary, suggested the grandiose idea which is at the base of the thirteenth canto of Dante's *Inferno*.[3]

From the concept of the departed soul to that of the external soul it is not a far cry, and as a matter of fact the external soul is, in a number of fairy tales, connected with a tree.[4] Once that concept fades away with the growing of civilization, another is readily substituted for it, and the tree which was formerly the seat of the external soul now becomes the life-tree of a person. Between the tree, planted at the birth of a human being, and the individual some mysterious connexion is thought to exist, so that, should the tree be felled or damaged, the individual is sure to be hurt or die in turn.[5] One can easily understand how, once such a belief was firmly rooted, by mere auto-suggestion, an accident befalling the tree would have the most serious consequences for the person who believed himself connected with the tree.

By a further refinement of human thought, the life-tree developed into what was now merely the 'luck' of a person or even of a whole family (the tree living of course as a rule much longer than any single individual of the human kind). Thus we arrive at the curious belief which connected the 'luck' of the earls of Winchilsea in Kent with an old oak grove at Eastwell. Once the grove was felled, the good fortune of the noble family [6] was at an end. This class of beliefs was well known in ancient Rome. Suetonius speaks of an oak with which the life of the Flavian dynasty was mysteriously bound up. At every birth in that family the oak in question sent forth a new twig, from the looks of which omens were taken as to the future of the child then born.[7] Even better known, on the Continent at all events, was the giant oak on the road between Hanover and Osnabrück which was nothing more nor less than the life-tree of the Hanover dynasty. When in the early summer of 1866 the tree all of a sudden and without any visible cause broke down, it presaged the approaching end of the dynasty, a catastrophe which was indeed not slow in coming.[8] The last outgrowth of this set of beliefs is the emblematic use made of plants and the tree symbol as exemplified in the armorial trees and also in Harlot's dream portending the birth of William the Conqueror [9]:

Sire, dist ele, io ne sai,
Se n'est pur ceo ke sungié ai,
Ke un arbre de mun cors isseit.
Qui uers le ciel amunt creisseit.
De l'umbre ki entur alout
Tute Normendie aumbrout.

In passing in review these curious notions, I have consistently used an animistic terminology, and there can indeed be little doubt that when a thinker such as Empedocles expresses his belief that certain souls go into trees his outlook is to all intents and purposes animistic. Yet it may well be doubted, first, whether these beliefs necessarily presuppose the animistic stage of mental development and, second, whether, if such is not the case, animism did not merely crowd out an older set of ideas, whatever their nature. As a matter of fact, such doubts are amply justified. One has only to bear in mind the numerous metamorphosis stories of antiquity relating how human beings were *transformed* into trees, one has only to remember that in the story of Polydorus in the *Aeneid* the tree grows out of the hero's *tomb*, to realize that behind the animistic idea lurks another, far older still, in which the soul concept was conspicuous only by its absence, in which the plant grows out of the body of the deceased—as it actually does, of course. The logical flaw lies simply in the assumption that the physical connexion implies a certain degree of identity between the individual whose corpse lies buried and the plant growing out of the tomb. Nor did animism altogether succeed in replacing the older conception. Mention has already been made of the ballad motive:

> Out of her breast there sprang a rose
> And out of his a briar;
> And they grew till they grew unto the church top,
> And there they tied into a true lovers' knot—

and the only objection voiced against the inference of the Anthropological School was that the idea in question would have been less ubiquitous in Europe had it not been for its occurrence in the widely-read Tristan Romance. In a more humble form, however, the concept lives on to this day, more or less subconsciously, of course. The old chronicle of the Pseudo-Turpin relates how sweet-smelling roses grew out of the corpses of the fallen Christians, but briars and thorns out of those of the Saracens. On the battle-field of Towton a certain kind of wild rose is reported to have sprung up.[10] Whilst scepticism is in place so far as this tradition is concerned (the rose in question is certainly somehow connected with the roses of Lancaster and York), no such reservation need be made for the poppies of Waterloo and those of the Flanders battle-fields. Even the old story of the Pseudo-Turpin is not without a parallel in England. Defoe in his *Tour through Great Britain* mentions the Daneweed at Barrow Hill,[11] the Scandinavian heathens having simply taken the place of the Mohammedan Saracens of the French compilation. Nor is it always possible, in a given text, to distinguish carefully between metamorphosis (the cruder form) and metempsychosis (the more advanced form, implying animism). Humble folk are neither logicians nor metaphysicians, nor does the new form abruptly take the place of the older one. It is, rather, a slow and continuous growth, intuition and not abstract thought; and if our science suffers from any fundamental defect of method this defect must be sought in the tendency (unavoidable, I fear) of folk-lorists to translate into terms of logic concepts that were not made for logical analysis.

Apart from the mysterious character of plant life, which must have struck man from the very first, there is another aspect which cannot have failed to impress, to wit, the venerable age of certain trees and the perennial growth of all vegetation. Man passes, the tree lasts; man is a new-comer where the tree is old. This fact and its realization appears to be at the bottom of the notion that man is descended from trees or created out of trees, a notion found in Ancient Greece as well as in Ancient Iceland and not dead even now.[12] The Damaras of South Africa and various tribes of the Indonesian archipelago believed in it even more firmly than Vergil or the author of the *Vǫluspá* ever did, since to the latter two the ancient dogma had already passed into the form of a legend. Nor is it possible to separate from this set of beliefs the modern stories about children coming from trees or from cabbage plants.

The tree stands while man passes away, generation following upon generation. Often the homestead was built around the tree; as we may infer from a passage in the Scandinavian *Vǫlsunga Saga*.[13] The tree was then a sort of pillar. By an extension, the heavenly vault came to be regarded as resting upon a pillar or upon pillars, and thus the concept of the world-tree arose.[14] The worship of such tree-pillars all over Northern Europe in ancient times is well attested. The famous oak of Geismar in Hesse, felled by Boniface, and the Old Saxon *Irminsul* are such trees; and it is the merit of Dr. A. B. Cook to have again drawn the attention of students to this cult, somewhat lost sight of since the days of Jacob Grimm. From the worship of an individual tree to that of a sacred grove the transition is not difficult; and it is characteristic that both in Old Italic and Old Celtic the same word denotes this natural sanctuary.[15]

Sacred trees, peculiar to the dendromorphic stage of religion, will in time pass into anthropomorphic divinities. The most outstanding example is that of Zeus-Jupiter and the Oak. It has been ascertained statistically that of all European forest trees the oak attracts lightning most frequently. The result was that it became the thunder and lightning tree *par excellence*, the thunder deity in person. When the anthropomorphic stage was reached at last, the thunder-god was naturally connected with the oak, the oak became his tree. Hence the association of Zeus-Jupiter with the oak,[16] hence also Jahveh (an old thunder-god) appearing to Abraham under the oak of Mamre, accompanied, moreover, by the Dioscuri, who in the sacred text have become *angels*, of course.[17] Hence it was that the oak of Geismar was sacred to Donar, the continental equivalent of the Norse Thor.

Another good example to illustrate this process will be found in the folk-lore of the rowan tree. The rowan was associated with the lightning on account of the red colour of its berries. When the anthropomorphic thunder-god was developed in the course of time the rowan assumed a special relation to him, and thus the rowan in Scandinavia was Thor's tree as much as the oak was in Germany. Thor, and the Thunder in general, being the sworn enemy of all evil powers, the rowan became a common *apotropaeon*, hence the verse :

Rowan-tree and red thread
Put the witches to their speed.

Last, aetiological stories were told to explain this connexion between god and tree at a time when the real reason had been forgotten, and thus we learn in the *Edda* that Thor, when in danger of being swept off by a wild current, clung to the rowan tree ; hence it is called 'Thor's salvation '.[18] There is at least a possibility that the Hellenic Hermes, composite figure though he is, originated with the elm tree,[19] and both Apollo and Balder were originally connected with the widespread cult of the apple-tree, the oldest fruit-tree of Northern and Central Europe.[20]

What is thus true of trees is more or less so of vegetation in general. True, herbs do not grow older than two summers at the most ; but this fact, known to the modern botanist, was not known to the unscientific mind. To early man as to humble folk everywhere in our own time vegetation is perennial. As the German popular song expresses it :

Alle Jahr kommt der Frühling,
Geht der Winter vorbei,
Der Mensch aber hat nur
Einen einzigen Mai.

To this consideration must be added the pharmacological qualities or virtues (in the Italian sense) of certain plants with which man was familiar long before the establishment of botany as a science. One of the most rudimentary uses to which vegetable poisons are put is unquestionably the manufacture of arrowpoisons.[21] This weapon, regarded as somewhat unchivalrous by the naïve sentimentalists who still cling to the queer idea that the horrors of that most accursed of human institutions, war, can be mitigated by half a dozen nice-sounding rules, is in use not only among present-day savages and barbarians; it was so among virtually all the barbaric nations of antiquity. Moreover, there are distinct traces of its use in the extant text of the *Iliad*, as pointed out by Dr. Gilbert Murray,[22] and a clear reference in the *Odyssey* (*I*. 260). If the aconite was called *Tyrhjalm*, the mezereum spurge *Tyviðr* in the Old Norse tongue, it is because, as poisonous plants furnishing arrow-poison, they were dedicated to Tyr, the Norse god of war.

To the barbaric stage of human development belong the so-called poison ordeals, still extensively practised all through the Dark Continent This curse has been ably described by Sir J. G. Frazer, in a masterful essay,[23] and little need be said here on this subject.

To the beginnings of civilization belong witch-gardens such as were credited to Medeia in the poem of Apollonius Rhodius and in the Orphic *Argonautica*.[24] They had not fallen into disuse in Shakespeare's time,[25] though in general the 'powder of succession' (arsenic) had made them superfluous.

The same pharmacological properties of plants procured for them a place in medicine from the very beginnings of that science. Most of the popular house remedies now in vogue are simply ingredients, usually of a vegetable character, which the medical science of a former age considered useful but which have subsequently been discarded, often enough merely because modern chemistry has discovered more efficient and cheaper substances. A number of virtues credited to certain plants were of course purely imaginary from the beginning, which does not mean that the very belief in their power may not have worked many a cure. A few of these plants deserve a passing note.

One of the foremost of medical herbs of the olden times is *Artemisia vulgaris*, called All-heal in English and, as the Latin name implies, closely connected with Artemis.[26] Quite as old, in the Orient at least, is the mandrake, quoted in *Genesis* as having the power of conferring fertility upon barren women. For this reason it was closely linked with the Semitic prototype of Aphrodite.[27] The ivy was equally associated with Dionysos, and Dr. Rendel Harris [28] has made out a good case that Dionysos grew out of the ivy as Zeus out of the oak and Apollo out of the apple-tree. No doubt because of this association the ivy bush was an English tavern-sign; hence the proverb 'Good wine needs no bush'. Certain tales will relate how man, ignorant of the medical virtue of a certain plant, was given the hint by some supernatural being, as when for example a mermaid says:

> Wad ye let the bonny may die in your hand
> And the mugwort flowering i' the land.

The story is no less common on the Continent.

An outgrowth of early medical science, a pseudo-science strangely mixed with theology, is the doctrine of the signature of plants, i.e. the belief that for every illness there is some herb with the power to cure it and that the herb bears the sign or mark by which it may be known against what particular illness it may be applied. This 'sign' is often nothing more than a very superficial association suggested by the shape or colour of the plant or even by its name. Thus a yellow flower will be regarded as a remedy against the jaundice; the fern-seed will make invisible because it is itself invisible or reputed to be so. The flower called 'Solomon's seal' will seal wounds. The Hound's Tongue (*Cynoglossum*) is reputed to cure the wounds of dogs. Cats will rub themselves upon and swallow cat-mint. Animals in general are believed to know those 'signs' and to cure themselves thanks to their superior knowledge. The herbals, which are filled with curious lore of this type, will even connect plants with astrology and the various properties ascribed to the planets by that pseudo-science. This curious fact alone would indicate that in this whole domain genuine folk-lore and learned currents are inextricably intermingled, and it would be equally vain to deny that the herbals had in their turn considerable influence upon popular beliefs and practices. Once more, therefore, folk-lore and book-lore go hand in hand, influencing one another, giving and receiving alternately.

The very power attributed to herbs led, in an age when science and magic were not clearly distinguished or even distinguishable, to the assumption that they were effective in the aversion of evil in general and demonic influences in particular. The full bearing of this will become clear if it is remembered that in primitive belief disease itself is but the consequence of such influences.

A common means to counteract demonic influences and magic is the use of strong smells. Thus, according to a fairly early *Life of St. Lucy*, the Roman governor, finding that she is rooted to the ground and cannot be carried to the *lupanar* as is his intention, has a foul and ill-smelling liquid poured over her.[29] For the same reason plants with strong odours are regarded as particularly good apotropaea. This explains the rôle played by garlic in the South European's combat against the witches; it explains the well-known aversion of German dwarfs and Celtic fairies for cumin bread. Hence the friendly advice given to the German farmer; no doubt by an interested party:

Peel no tree,
Relate no dream,
Bake no cumin in bread,
So will God help thee in thy need.

Similar powers are attributed to vervain and rue, and in Germany to the herbs called *Dosten* (Origanum) and *Dorant* (Antirrhinum). Of the latter a story is current relating how a peasant woman was being abducted by a dwarf who, on passing with her through her garden, admonished her:

Heb auf dein Gewand,
Dass du nicht fallest in Dosten und Dorant.

It goes without saying that the clever woman then stepped on the plants on purpose and thus escaped from the demon.[30] The same explanation holds for the apotropaeic powers of vervain, dill, angelica, pimpernel, and other garden plants. Nor need it be supposed that the date of their peculiar prominence in North European folk-lore is prehistoric; on the contrary, most of these plants were imported into the countries north of the Alps either by the Romans or in mediaeval times by the Benedictine monks. What existed first, of course, was the notion that any strong smell will drive away demons and break charms; then any plant might be called into service which somehow seemed to have the necessary properties.

Other plants again owe their apotropaeic virtue to their red colour. Fire, as is well known, drives away spirits; hence the desirability of keeping a burning candle by the side of the mother and her new-born child. The rowan and juniper, because of their red berries, came to be excellent apotropaeics. Why the flax and the holly acquired such a reputation is not known; but it may be surmised that the former had some connexion with the ancient Teutonic Mother Earth, whilst the latter seems to have been a holy plant with the Celts. Of the trees the ash has particular powers prevailing against witchcraft, a superstition which must be connected with Pliny's famous statement of the aversion of snakes for ash-trees.[31] Certain plants are good even against the evil eye; witness the Irish shamrock and Apuleius' ringwort. Garlic, too, has still such a function in Modern Greece.

The powers supposed to be inherent in plants further suggested some more direct connexion between certain trees and herbs and the world of demons. Certain trees have a special reputation of being seats for demonic powers. One of them is the fig-tree from India to the Mediterranean countries, another is the walnut tree in most European countries where it grows. The walnut tree near Benevento in Italy is of course well known. In two fairy-tale types of considerable diffusion demons are expressly mentioned as sitting in the branches of trees or assembling under trees, where they are overheard by mortals.[32] The yew is another uncanny tree. In the Middle English *Sir Orfeo* the queen is abducted by the king of the elves when resting under a yew tree.

Certain plants are associated with the chthonic powers and were therefore tabooed as early as the time of Pythagoras. The bean is perhaps the best illustration. Nor is there any need for supposing totemic or other systems to explain the matter. In Modern European folk-lore beans still produce bad dreams and hence portend evil. The solution does not fall into the domain of folk-lore or the history of religion, but into that of medical science. By an extension easy to understand one came to establish the rule : If you wish for awful dreams or desire to go crazy sleep in a bean field all night. As a matter of fact, no such desperate measure is necessary ; a good dish of Boston baked beans prepared in that lovely city by an inexperienced cook will do as well. With the ancients, the white narcissus flower with its peculiar, though faint, smell was a chthonic plant. The true reason why the plant acquired this reputation we do not know. The smell certainly suggests anything but death. The story of Persephone picking a narcissus flower when the god of the nether-world surprised her is of course nothing more than an aetiological tale and of no value whatever.[33]

In Germany and England the rosemary had a chthonic reputation, as may be seen from the German folk-song :

Ich hab die Nacht geträumet
Wohl einen schweren Traum,
Es wuchs in meinem Garten
Ein Rosmarienbaum.

Ein Kirchhof war der Garten,
Ein Blumenbeet das Grab,
Und von dem grünen Baume
Fiel Kron und Blüte ab.

Die Blätter tät ich sammeln
In einen goldnen Krug,
Der fiel mir aus den Händen,
Dass er in Stücke schlug.

Draus sah ich Perlen rinnen
Und Tröpflein rosenrot:
Was mag der Traum bedeuten?
Ach Liebster, bist du tot?

The plant itself was introduced into Europe from the Orient after the crusades; how it came to acquire such a significance is not at all clear. On the other hand, if the parsley has a chthonic flavour in Modern England we know definitely that the plant carried this reputation with it when it first migrated beyond the Alps. In Ancient Greece it was decidedly a chthonic plant, and the expression *δεῖσθαι σελίνου* i.e., to be in need of parsley, simply meant to be on the verge of dying. Another chthonic plant is the fennel; sowing fennel is the equivalent of sowing sorrow. Again it is to be suspected that the plant had this gloomy aspect before it left the shores of the Mediterranean.

Certain plants are associated with a definite class of demons, as the ragwort is the fairies' horse in Ireland. On the other hand, it would be hazardous to infer from the name alone an elaborate set of beliefs. For example, the common weed *Cuscuta epithymum* is called 'fairies' flax' in Celtic regions, as the related *Cuscuta vulgaris* is named 'Teufelsflachs' in Germany. Similarly in the latter country *Linaria vulgaris* is referred to as 'Frauenflachs', i.e. the flax of the wild women, of course. What struck the imagination of the peasant was the superficial resemblance of these plants to the domestic flax, combined with their unsuitability for man's use. So the conclusion was near at hand that the plant must be of some use to some one, and that some one was the spirit of the wild, a fairy or the Christian Devil. Pure fancy created names such as fairies' thimble for the foxglove or neckroot for the water hemlock (in which last cases the poisonous properties of the plants had something to do with the designation).

These curious denominations of plants lead us further to the more general topic of plant names.[34] As a rule, purely exterior qualities, usually referring to the form and shape of the flower, suggested more or less fanciful associations. Very common, for example, is the naming of plants after animals. Thus we find in English an *Adder's Tongue* (Ophioglossum vulgatum), in German a *Löwenmaul* (Linaria vulgaris), in German and French a *Löwenzahn* and a *dent de lion* (Taraxacum vulgare) respectively, etc. Certain poisonous plants are named after the animals which they serve to destroy, as for example the aconite, called *wolf's bane* in English, *Wolfsgift* in German, *estrangle loup* in French, *gramen pardalianchen* in Solinus, etc.[35] Often enough also the name is not at all transparent, as is the case in the English and German habit of naming certain wild species, in distinction from the cultivated and garden species, after the dog. It should be added that the study of the popular plant names is still in its infancy; yet this much is certain, that the great uniformity of plant names throughout Europe presupposes a migration of such names from one country to another or, in other cases, their common derivation from some Latin or Greek designation which need not always have entered the ancient glossaries. Thus the English *dandelion* is clearly a borrowing from the French, whilst the German *Löwenzahn* is evidently a loan translation. The Icelandic *Tysfiola* is a loan translation from the Latin *Viola Martis*, the Old Norse war-god Tyr having taken the place of the Roman Mars. To the domain of philology rather than to that of folk-lore belong the numerous cases of popular etymology noticeable in plant names. The Latin names of certain garden plants introduced into Teutonic countries either by the Roman colonists or by the Benedictine monks of the early Middle Ages were not only meaningless to the people of Teutonic speech but also hard to pronounce; hence the series of popular etymologies such as English *feverfew* for Febrifuga, *gladden* for Gladiolum, *hop* for Humulus, *lovage* for Lubestica, *mallow* for Malva, and the German *Liebstöckl* for Levisticum, *Baldrian* for Valeriana, *Bibernell* for Pimpinella, etc.; and the English *rosemary*, the German *Rosmarin*, is nothing but a popular etymology of the Persian name of this Oriental plant. Certain plant names, finally, all sufficiently complex, have so far defied all attempts at some explanation. Such are the English *Kiss me behind the garden gate*, and *None so pretty* (Saxifraga), *Parson in the pulpit*, *cows and calves*, *lords and ladies*, *sops in wine*, *Wake-robin* (Arum), *hen and chickens* (Glechoma hederacea), *cocks and hens* (Plantago lanceolata), *David's harp* (Polygonatum multiflorum), and the German *Je länger je lieber* and *Gretchen im Grünen*. On the other hand, the German name for Viola tricolor, *Stiefmütterchen*, has been explained from the peculiar shape of the flower, as has the English name for this plant, *Three faces in a hood*, whilst the Latin *Noli me tangere* is transparent enough.

Some of these names, as for example the German *Je länger je lieber*, are sufficiently indicative of the rôle played by certain plants in the language of symbolism. Whether such symbols are of genuinely popular origin or whether, as is more likely, they have descended among the people from higher social strata, their importance in the folk-lore of our day is undisputed, and a few words must be said on the subject. The rose as a symbol of love was unknown in the Occident before the introduction of the garden rose from the East. The olive as a symbol of peace, occurring as it does in the Old Testament and the classical authors, has no other provenance. ‘ Rosemary is for remembrance ’, as Ophelia says : but we do not know whether the Oriental plant acquired this symbolical meaning in the Occident. In other cases the symbolism, decidedly Western, is fairly transparent. Thus if the violet is a symbol of modesty, this notion has its origin in the retiring habit of the plant, and if the aspen denotes fear, the origin must be sought in the trembling leaves peculiar to this tree, and a similar observation holds for the ivy, a symbol of fidelity. In other cases the historical connexion is sufficiently known. Thus the laurel, connected as it was with the Greek Apollo, became on that account a symbol of glory, no doubt in classical or post-classical times, the primitive Apollo having of course nothing to do with poetry and literature. Similarly, the connexion, quite early, of the myrtle with Aphrodite, explains the symbolism of that plant. The connexion of the hazel-nut with the idea of human fertility is less obvious, and no plausible explanation appears to have been given so far. Certain ‘ nutting songs ’ still current in Central Europe leave little doubt, however, that during the ‘ nutting ’ season considerable licence prevailed, in former times, when the Puritanical code was not yet *de rigueur* either in this country or on the Continent.[36] What rôle the ‘ nutting ’ once played in English village life may still be seen from the pages of Thomas Hardy’s *Under the Greenwood Tree*. That certain plants, rich in seeds, should be made to symbolize much the same idea needs no further explanation, and the custom of throwing rice over a newly-wed couple belongs to the same order of symbols.

Before leaving this peculiar set of beliefs we should at least mention the names of certain plants, the identity of which is not always perfectly clear, and each of which would deserve a monograph, though only a few have received one so far. They are plants credited with supernatural powers, which have for this reason played, in the history of human religion, a rôle altogether out of proportion to their real importance.

I begin by quoting certain plants and herbs supposed to make their bearers invisible. In Central and Northern Europe fern-seed and bird’s nest, in Southern Europe the heliotrope, enjoy this reputation. Yet they are by no means the only ones. In the case of the former it may well be that we are simply dealing with a case of primitive logic : fern-seed (a name botanically quite incorrect) is invisible or nearly so, hence it is able to make others invisible. The heliotrope being an Oriental plant, the superstition in question no doubt migrated to Europe from the East.

The folkloristic importance of the mistletoe, which has, fortunately, received a good deal of attention in recent years,[37] is West and Central European no less than Mediterranean. What appears to have been chiefly instrumental in bringing this plant into prominence is its parasitical character. Its rôle in the religions of the ancient Celts and Germans is well known from the passages of Pliny and the Norse Balder myth. But the researches of Sir J. G. Frazer have established a fair degree of probability for the assumption that the 'golden bough' of Aeneas is no other plant, though perhaps of a different species.

The divining rod, with its magical properties,[38] unquestionably based upon sound facts of a purely psychical nature, is taken from a limited number of trees, though usually from the common hazel. It is reasonably certain that this fact cannot be separated from various magical qualities ascribed to that shrub.

Mention has been made above of the mandrake, a plant credited with the most varied properties, all frankly of a supernatural character. Foremost ranks its supposed virtue in helping sterile women, a property attested by the book of *Genesis*.

There is, further, the famous springwort, a plant supposed to be able to open the entrances to hidden treasures, sometimes also to restore lost eyesight.[39] The antiquity of the beliefs attached to it admits of no doubt; Pliny the Elder mentions the plant. Yet its Occidental origin may well be doubted, the more so because the story attached to it, relating how it is obtained in the first place, has a very close parallel in the Jewish Solomon Legend, where the part of the marvellous root is taken by an equally marvellous stone.[40]

Lastly, there can be little doubt that the apple-tree and its fruit played a very important rôle indeed even before the cultivation of the garden apple.[41] The apples of the Hesperides, Idun's apples, and the curious connexion between the tree and the Hellenic Apollo, the Norse Balder, decidedly point in this direction, and the Celtic *Avallon* was probably the *Insula Pomarum* of which various authors of late Antiquity and the Middle Ages speak in terms formerly applied to the pre-Hellenic Elysium.

No far-fetched explanations are necessary to account for the rôle of certain plants in divination. For such purposes, it would seem, man has at all times hit upon the most ready-at-hand and puerile means, and it is but natural that plants and flowers should not have escaped his attention. Thus we find a very large number of love oracles, from daisy, primrose, or marsh marigold to the acacia leaf. Again, the divinatory practices connected with the so-called Adonis-gardens simply require a plant with quickly germinating seeds.

Finally, the use of certain plants or their products for the manufacture of love-philtres, a use going back into Indo-European times,[42] cannot very well be separated from other medical virtues ascribed, rightly or wrongly, to certain plants. The whole subject is still awaiting monographic treatment from the pen of a botanist who is at the same time a folklorist.

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CHAPTER XIII

ANIMAL LORE

IT has often been remarked that to the 'primitive mind', as to Saint Francis, animals no less than inanimate objects appear endowed with faculties which, if not identical with those of man, are at least not appreciably inferior to his. So far as the higher animals are concerned, such a view cannot even be called essentially faulty; it is on the contrary well known that such animals often enough show greater insight in solving a problem connected with their own safety and well-being than does man. Yet it would be futile to derive all folk-belief about animals or animal lore from such facts, which can obviously cover at most only a fairly small portion of the total amount of the beliefs in question. The rest is to be explained, as usual, by an unwarranted extension of observed facts into a domain to which they do not belong: to put it in a word, by false analogy, by false logic.

One of the most common assumptions is that animals are able to foresee approaching dangers. The rats credited with leaving a vessel about to sink constitute a familiar example. The story of the storks of Aquileia which left their nests a short time before the city was taken and burned by the Huns, is another,[1] finding a close parallel in the modern superstition which assumes that when storks and swallows leave their nests on a house it is a sign that the house in question will soon burn down. The raven which in an Icelandic tale warns a young girl of an approaching disaster and thus saves her [2] belongs to the same category. The number of warning animals in universal folk-lore is extremely large, and in most cases the prophetic qualities ascribed to the animal are clearly seen to be at the basis of the stories. Then again there is the no less numerous class of tales relating how an animal guided either a human being, as in the case of Aristomenes' fox and the animal of Sindbad's Voyage, or a whole army, as in various Ancient Italic legends and the bird leading Charlemagne on the right road when he undertook his fabulous crusade to the

Holy Land. At all events, it would be extremely hazardous to advance, without further details, a theory concerning a primitive totemism [3] to explain such tales. The animal in this class of stories is simply a trustworthy guide, and it would be difficult to deny that under certain circumstances an animal would not indeed be such a guide. This comes out even more clearly in the many stories relating how an animal indicated a ford across a river to a beaten and pursued army, legends such as the one at the base of the foundation of Frankfort.

A first extension of this set of beliefs, most of them not yet far removed from accurate observation, may be seen in the assumption that animals are able to see ghosts and spectres that remain invisible to man. The animals of most frequent occurrence in tales of this type are, for obvious reasons, horses and dogs. The former will refuse to go on when beholding an apparition, the latter will howl on seeing it pass. Thus in the *Odyssey* (XVI. 160 sqq.) the dogs see Athena, who remains invisible to Telemachus, and in the Old Testament Balaam's ass is quicker to recognize Jahveh (in the extant text of course an 'angel') than his master, learned prophet and magician though he was. The current notion that the howling of dogs signifies an approaching death is a natural outgrowth of this belief, the howling being evidently occasioned by the apparition of Death itself, invisible to man but quite visible to animals.

Totemic beliefs have also been invoked for the purpose of explaining the vast group of stories relating how the hero or, in a few cases, the heroine, was suckled by an animal or animals. The antiquity of the group admits of no doubt, and it goes unquestionably back into prehistoric times. Yet again it must be emphasized that, unless further details are available, such an hypothesis is far from plausible. Totemism, as is well known, means chiefly belief in a descent of a certain human group from an animal ancestor. From this it follows that the hero must play some genealogical rôle, must have descendants, real or hypothetical ones, or else his animal antecedents remain a blind motive. Further, the animal should really be his father or mother, not merely his foster-father or nurse. These two premisses admitted, one realizes at once that the majority of such stories can at best be analogical formations. A totemic idea does seem indeed to be at the bottom of the story of Romulus and Remus. For whilst it is true that neither of the Roman twins left offspring, yet they may be (and doubtless were) regarded as the common ancestors of the whole Roman nation, which was thus, by a bold construction, derived from a *lupa*. In the second place, it is practically certain that their mother, before she became a Vestal, was *Silvia*, the she-wolf. Yet such cases are after all rare, and details pointing in the direction of Totemism are as a rule absent. What must be borne in mind is, of course, first the powerful rôle of analogy ; once such a tale had been launched successfully, the imitations would soon grow like mushrooms, and a considerable portion of all extant tales of this group are most probably secondary derivations. Yet even to explain the original root, Totemism is as a rule not absolutely necessary. There are a number of reasons why a hero should have been said to have been suckled by a she-wolf or a she-bear, or a lioness. The most important of them is naturally the assumption that such milk cannot but have had a certain influence upon his physical and warlike qualities. The same observation holds true, I believe, for the motive of the animal father as occurring in the fairy tale of *Bear's Son* referred to in the first chapter of this book.

Tales about the thievish animal whose misdeed is discovered only after the death penalty has been inflicted upon an innocent person are not at all uncommon. Since in practically all of these stories the guilty animal is a bird, as a rule a jackdaw, it is clear that such stories have for their base an observation of zoological facts. A good number of them may be suspected of being merely the different variants of a migratory legend which would deserve a good monograph.

The story made famous by Schiller's poem on the Cranes of Ibykus is also a migratory legend. It is characteristic, at all events, that there exist versions in which the guilt of the murderer is brought to light, not by animals, but by the sun.[4]

Animals in particular are apt to manifest the divine power of saints and holy men.[5] Not only do they feed them occasionally and upon divine command—a number of the Mediaeval legends are but replicas of Old Testament ones—but they are driven out of a given place by a saint, either at the request of the inhabitants or simply because they would disturb him in his devotional exercises. The snakes of Saint Patrick and the frogs of the village of Schwante, in Brandenburg, condemned to be mute, are cases in point. Nor is the type Christian or even Jewish. On the contrary, Diodorus Siculus and the Latin compiler Solinus gravely tell us that the crickets of Rhegium were mute (and mayhap still are) because they had disturbed Herakles in his sleep and were rudely told by him to keep still henceforth.[6]

In still another type the holy man, somewhat in imitation of Orpheus, bends even wild animals to his command, and the wolf or bear that has imprudently destroyed the saint's horse or donkey is compelled to draw the saint's vehicle. The hagiographic character of such legends is of course obvious, yet it would be an error in method for this reason to exclude this group of tales from the domain of folk-lore to which they properly belong.

The existence side by side of two currents, the learned tradition and genuine folk-belief, is clearly visible throughout the domain of animal lore. The study of zoology is not precisely modern in the strict sense of the word. Aristotle, Pliny, the compiler Aelian, or rather his lost sources, all are genuine precursors of scientific zoologists, although a good deal of their material must now be regarded as belonging to the realm of fable. When in the Middle Ages scientific pursuits had practically stopped, the various compilers were content with the copying of the facts assembled in Classical and Late Antiquity, hence the *Physiologus* and the various bestiaries in the vernacular tongues of Europe.[7] These compilations in their turn were not without influence on living popular belief, chiefly owing to the allegorical method employed by the Mediaeval clergy anxious to draw moral lessons from any material that presented itself to their purview. Thus even fabulous beasts such as the unicorn [8] and the phœnix [9] are quite as much at home in popular tradition as they were in the bestiaries of the learned. The former penetrated into the fairy-tale type of the *Brave Tailor*, and it is to be suspected that the *Golden Bird* of another type is nothing but a reminiscence of the ancient phœnix, itself a personification of the sun.

Yet even about very real animals, the bestiaries, following the ancient compilations, told many strange stories which did not remain the property of the clerks but penetrated among the folk and are reflected to this day in many popular sayings, proverbs and similes.[10] As an illustration one might quote the fables of the she-bear licking her young ones into their proper shape, of the ostrich hiding his head in the sand, of the swan's song, of the weeping crocodile, and of the basilisk's eye. A number of such tales in Herodotus testify to the antiquity of the genre, which was well known in Ancient India where we hear of the destruction of the crab by its young, of the silkworm by its own coils, of the rising of the spider from its destroyed web to a new home (life), etc.

Quite apart from this learned heritage taken over by the Mediaeval and modern worlds from classical antiquity, a large number of animal forms have a cluster of folk-traditions attached to them. Nor is it always very easy to determine whether a given belief is indigenous in Western, Central or Northern Europe or whether it is ultimately likewise due to the influence of the classical tradition. This is particularly the case when a given modern superstition is encountered in the pages of Aristotle or Pliny. Are we to say, for example, that the uncanny reputation attached to the owl arose independently in Celtic and Teutonic Europe, or that it was taken over by the Celts and Teutons, during the Middle Ages, from the books of the ancients, among whom the bird in question had much the same reputation ? The question cannot be answered off-hand, and a number of other factors must be taken into consideration. Take for example the common superstition about the ill-luck produced by peacock feathers, a superstition known as early as classical antiquity. We know the peacock to have come to Europe from India in post-Homeric times, and it is clear therefore that the belief in the peculiar quality of peacock feathers must have originated in India or at all events in the Orient. We may say the same of the apotropaeic qualities of the rooster :

> The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,
> Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat
> Awake the god of day, and at his warning,
> Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,
> Th' extravagant and erring spirit hies
> To his confine.

The bird is, relatively speaking, a new-comer in Europe : his lore no doubt accompanied him in his migration from Orient to Occident. Says the *Bundehesh* (XIX. 33) : "The cock is created in opposition to demons and wizards, co-operating with the dog." The vast body of folk-lore attached to the domestic cat cannot be older than the cat itself, which, outside of Egypt, appears to have been unknown in ancient Europe and the Mediterranean countries. Again, the possibility of transpositions must be taken into consideration. It has been remarked repeatedly that a number of fox stories are attached to the jackal in India, a sufficient proof that such a transfer must have taken place, no matter whether one concedes the right of priority to Europe or to India. A similar transposition is noticeable in a certain story relating how a snake-charmer came to grief in his task of exorcising snakes so that they might rush into a burning fire and thus perish and rid the neighbourhood. At the end a white snake appears which kills the exorciser. In a limited number of variants the animals are no longer snakes but weasels. It is virtually certain that the snakes may claim the priority, not only on account of the greater number of variants and their geographical distribution, but also because the whole tale is undoubtedly of Indian origin and derived from the well-known story of Indra's sacrifice of the naga snakes.[11]

Another important factor is the geographical distribution of a given animal. Thus the entire body of folk-lore clustering around the figure of the lion is originally foreign to Europe for the simple reason that this animal had disappeared from that continent as early as the heroic age of Greece. The conspicuous rôle of the lion in legends and coats-of-arms is therefore ultimately of learned origin and penetrated among the people during the Middle Ages, so that finally the generosity, courage and intelligence of the lion came to be familiar facts even to people who had never seen one in actual life.

Again, some Alsatian folklorists mention the custom of suspending bats on branches of trees to drive the locusts away. One wonders how on earth locusts could ever have become such a plague in a province of France as to require such drastic measures. The matter becomes clear if we read in the *Cosmography* of the Arabic compiler Kazwini :

> If a bat is suspended on a village tree the locusts will pass over the village without stopping.

Since neither Pliny nor anyone of the Mediaeval compilers mentions this curious bit of animal lore, we are evidently dealing with an Oriental importation ; for it is chiefly in the Orient (and North Africa) that locusts are apt to become a terror to the peasant and that bats are known as their most dreaded enemies.

A part of animal lore, though in reality but a chapter in a far larger set of beliefs and superstitions, is the well-known fear that naming a certain dangerous or noxious animal will inevitably attract it, for which reason that name is avoided as much as possible, being as a rule replaced by a synonym or a circumlocution.[12] Thus in large parts of Central Europe and Scandinavia the wolf is not called by its real name, but referred to as the ' Silent One ' or the ' Wood-runner '. *Silvia*, the forest-woman, was undoubtedly the Old Latin circumlocution for *lupa*, hence the name of the mother of the Roman twins. If the Teutonic word for ' bear ' differs from the Latin, whilst the Russian means, literally, ' honey-eater ', and if the ancient Irish had no word corresponding to the Latin *lupus*, but said instead *cú allaid*, that is, ' wild dog ', it is clear that such a variety of forms is due to this superstition, the circumlocution in the course of time entirely replacing the original word. Very much the same state of things obtains for the weasel, called by all sorts of flattering circumlocutions in a majority of the European tongues,[13] and the rise of the use of proper names for a set of animals noticeable in the *Roman de Renard*, such as *Reginhard* for the fox, *Isengrin* for the wolf, *Bruin* for the bear, has possibly the same origin, although it goes without saying, of course, that such a theory can be advanced only for the oldest fund of the romance, whilst analogy explains the rest of the names occurring in that vast cycle of vernacular poetry.

Let us now pass in review, necessarily briefly, the most important animals to which a cluster of various folk-beliefs is attached, without deciding always whether these are to be accounted for by the assumption of a popular growth or by the influence of learned tradition.

The number of stories told about apes in Europe is naturally restricted and even then largely learned. In Africa and Indonesia, however, matters are quite different, and the belief that the apes are men who refuse to speak in order not to be obliged to work is a genuine piece of negro folk-lore. What is told in Europe about the various qualities of the ape is largely due to the fable literature of the Middle Ages, whilst still other stories probably arose as more or less truthful narratives of African hunters of which there existed a number as early as the days of Nero and probably even in the Egyptian empire of the Pharaohs .

The folk-lore of the European bat, on the other hand, is not only abundant but no doubt entirely indigenous. There is the widespread belief that bats eat the bacon hung up in the flue or that they get entangled in women's hair, which latter superstition could for obvious reasons not arise in the days of this writing. Nor is the animal absent from children's rhymes, witness the following specimen collected in Cornwall :

Airy mouse, airy mouse, fly over my head,
And you shall have a crust of my bread ;
And when I brew and when I bake,
You shall have a piece of my wedding cake.

On the other hand, the well-known fable of the bat who in a war between the mammals and the birds chose the wisest part any reasonable person can take in a war (though the fable does not take this view-point) is unquestionably of learned origin.

The idea that the hedgehog spikes apples by rolling about on the ground and thus carries them to its lair is a genuine piece of folk-lore and has no scientific basis whatever. The assumption that the mole is blind rests upon an incorrect or rather a superficial observation and has been disproved by modern science

The rôle of the domestic dog in folk belief is relatively inconsiderable, no doubt because the animal has been man's constant and familiar friend for thousands of years. Precisely the opposite is true of the wolf wherever it still exists. It is as a rule identified with the god of Death or with Death itself ; its sight renders mute like the sight of a spectre. Its name must not be pronounced lest it be attracted thereby. Nor is it possible to neglect the long series of werewolf superstitions. On the other hand, if the fox is seen to be fairly prominent in folk-lore, this is largely due to literary influences, at least in Europe. It may be safely asserted that without the *Roman de Renard* and the fox fables we should not have one-tenth of all the fox stories with which we are now familiar. The full significance of this remark will come out still more clearly if we compare the rôle of the fox in the folk-lore of the Far East, in China and Japan, where it is due to no literary currents. It resembles, in more than one respect, the rôle of the naga snake in India. Men marry fox-maidens in human shape, unaware, as a general rule, of their true character, or they enter a fox city, where life goes on much as it does among humans.[14] In other words, the fox of Eastern Asia is quite a different animal, folkloristically speaking, from the European fox.

The character of the cat as the most recent of domesticated animals comes out clearly in its unusually important rôle in popular belief and superstition. It is distinctly a supernatural, an uncanny animal, connected with witches and the devil, to whom it is offered on certain occasions. Witches in particular are able to transform themselves into cats, and often enough they will ride on cats to their nefarious meetings. In certain story types witches or other supernatural beings actually alternate with cats, as for example in the European variants of the story of the Death of Pan, familiar to all English readers from the narrative of Plutarch.[15] Many of the cat variants of this tale hail from territory either inhabited by Celts or having a strong Celtic substratum, and in Celtic Europe in particular we meet with monster cats that must be fought by the hero in much the same fashion as a dragon is fought and killed in the rest of the world. King Arthur himself was fabled to have had such a fight with a monster cat.[16]

Whatever folk-lore is attached to the lion is, in Europe at least, the outcome of learned influences, many of which are, however, sufficiently old. It is not surprising that in India the tiger plays approximately the rôle of the northern wolf ; even were-tigers are known there. Of the remaining carnivora the weasel in particular is the subject of certain superstitious fears, as has been pointed out above, the result being a tendency to use circumlocutions in the place of the real name of the animal.

Precisely why the hare has acquired a certain reputation and why this most timid of all animals can produce superstitious fear is far from clear. Yet the hare is closely associated with witches and witchcraft and of a decidedly evil omen. It is not even certain whether this rôle of the hare in modern European folk-lore can be connected with what Caesar says about the taboo in which it stood with the Ancient Britons, the less so because the territory covered by this class of superstitions by far exceeds the territory inhabited by the ancient Celts.

The squirrel is chiefly a 'fire animal', i.e. associated with stories relating how the fire was brought to earth by an animal for the benefit of man. The reason is unquestionably the peculiar colour of the animal.

The domestic rat is classed as 'vermin' generally and considered as an instrument in the hands of the Evil One. In Pomerania, a country with a decidedly Slavonic substratum, though of German speech, a king of the rats is known, a personification of the Evil Spirit presiding over the rats as over the other vermin meant to plague man.

The mouse is principally a 'soul animal'; that is, the human soul when leaving the body in life or after death is reputed to take such a form. There can be little doubt that the mice of the legend of Bishop Hatto were originally but the souls of the innocent victims.[17]

The domestic animals, cattle, sheep, hogs and horses, while connected with numerous superstitious customs, have collected but little folk-lore about them which can be properly classed as 'animal lore', no doubt for the same reason that accounts for the relative poverty of 'dog lore'. Horses—like dogs—have the power of seeing spectres invisible to man. Weird creatures will take on the shape of some domestic animal and appear about the village by night, usually announcing an impending epidemic. Nixes will assume the shape of horses—witness the Scottish kelpie—or of bulls, as in the well-known legend regarding the origin of the Merovingians. The belief is doubtless fairly old, as may be judged from the Greek *hippokrene* and the horse and bull shape of Poseidon.

The reputation of the Indian elephant for wisdom as found in quite a number of Indian stories is no doubt partly based upon solid scientific fact and only to a certain extent the outcome of poetic imagination and a certain amount of exaggeration. Very much the same is true of the musical qualities ascribed to the seal in North-western Europe, to the dolphin in the Mediterranean, as exemplified by the well-known legend of Arion, connected with the Mediterranean Apollo cult.

Bird lore is intimately linked with the various practices of augury already referred to. What led to this class of beliefs is most probably the simple consideration that after all the birds are closest to heaven.[18] What is certain is that these beliefs in their unorganized form of 'superstition' are far older than the pseudo-science which grew out of them and represents their organized form, the genesis of which would be unthinkable without the assumption of a considerable amount of priestcraft. It is natural enough, of course, that even in augury certain birds should play a more prominent rôle than others.

Birds of prey are by their very character, their strength and often enough also their size, most apt to attract man's attention. Hence the rôle of eagles, vultures and hawks in universal divination. Yet it is probably not for this reason that the eagle came to be the bird of Jupiter. It is more probably in its quality of 'thunder bird' that it was first associated with the chief god of the ancient Mediterranean creed, and it is even likely that the eagle was Zeus himself in his theriomorphic stage.[19] At the same time it is well to bear in mind that as the emblem of the Roman armies it makes its appearance late in the period of the Republic and was a mere imitation of Oriental models. The Roman eagle, of course, in turn furnished the basis for the various coats-of-arms of more modern states, and when in 1776 the National Congress in Philadelphia finally adopted a New World variety of that bird, it kept pretty well within the tradition, though by a queer irony of fate the bird in question must be classed as a vulture rather than as an eagle. Of that bird, more greedy and rapacious than any of its European *confrères* (if that is possible), one might well say with the poet:

> Du hässlicher Vogel, wirst du einst
> Mir in die Hände fallen,
> So rupfe ich dir die Federn aus
> Und hacke dir ab die Krallen.

Benjamin Franklin, the story goes, had recommended the Thanksgiving turkey for the national emblem; but in spite of its equally great appropriateness it was rejected by the Fathers. The vulture may have acquired its functions in Roman ornithomancy by its habit of feeding on human carcasses. According to primitive logic it is thereby apt to acquire some of the qualities of man, i.e. human wisdom. The ominous reputation of the owl is based entirely upon the weird appearance of that bird, its nightly flight and peculiar cry.

Hardly less important, in the history of divination, is the crow family of birds. What accounts for their rôle is, first, their peculiarity of feeding upon carcasses, second, their ability to imitate the human voice.[20]

Why the pigeon generally brings ill luck is not known. The bird itself being a stranger in Europe, it may be supposed to have brought this ominous reputation with it from the countries of the Near East and ultimately from India, where it was most feared as a death-messenger. This is certainly true of the peacock, a bird known to have reached the Mediterranean some time near the sixth century before our era. Its lore merely accompanied it from India to Europe. So with the cock, likewise a new-comer in Europe and feared by the goblins no doubt long before it first left India. It may be conjectured that most of the superstitions connected with the chicken yard existed in the countries of Asia before they became current in Europe with the extension of chicken-raising.[21]

A considerable body of beliefs is attached to the cuckoo, examples of which are to be found in every folk-lore collection. They are in part not easy to account for; yet most of them are probably far from recent. We know that the cuckoo was much observed by the ancient Greek peasant, and in Argos the bird seems to have shared with the eagle the honour of being a theriomorphic Zeus.

As many strange traditions cluster about the slender figure of the wren. Whether the wren-hunting of the British Isles is indeed the survival of a wren-totem and a wren-sacrifice cannot be affirmed without further investigation, though such a survival would in itself be not altogether unlikely. Of unknown origin is the touching legend according to which the wren as well as the robin is credited with covering up corpses they may find in the field, a legend rendered by John Webster in these words:

Call for the robin redbreast and the wren,
Since o'er shady groves they hover
And with leaves and flowers do cover
The friendless bodies of unburied men.

To this should be compared the function of the Bhârunda bird in Indian tradition. It is he who buries the Hyperboreans when these well-nigh immortal people die after a life of 11,000 years. With their strong beaks these birds are said to take up the corpses and to bury them in caves.

No less important in folk-lore is the woodpecker family. The red woodpecker came to be associated with Zeus, no doubt because with its red crown it was a typical 'fire bird'.[22]

The halcyon or kingfisher appears to have been even better known to the ancients than to the moderns. The ancient fable of the ‘ halcyon days ’ is one of those many tales that would honour the average bestiary.

The belief that certain birds, particularly storks, are transformed men or capable of reassuming their human shape, occurs sporadically in Europe and appears to be essentially a floating motive connected with the migratory habit of the birds and their ability to find again, year after year, the place of their former abode.

Water-fowl more often than not become symbols of fertility, unquestionably on account of their connexion with the water. This explains the rôle of goose and swan either as birds of the mother-goddess of old, the Asiatic Leto and the Roman Juno, or of the Dioscures, born from an egg.[23]

Lastly, the notion that birds are but forms assumed by human souls has its origin in the ability of birds to fly, an ability which they are supposed to share, in popular belief, with the human soul. As a matter of fact, the ‘ soul bird ’ is met with all over the earth, and the fancy at the base of this strange identification is unquestionably one of the most rudimentary of which the human brain is capable.[24]

Of the reptiles the snake has almost everywhere attracted most attention, and for a variety of reasons. There is first the ability of snakes to throw off their old skin, a process which untutored man identified with a process of rejuvenation. This led to the assumption that snakes are immortal and is at the base of the myth of the Fall of Man with the snake as a chief actor. The story is neither of Hebrew nor of African origin (as Sir J. G. Frazer assumed), but is found, with slight variants, in Magna Graecia, Attica, Mesopotamia, and as far east as India. So far as the available material admits of a definite conclusion, it would appear to have arisen in Mesopotamia and thence to have migrated both east and west, arriving in India no less surely than in Africa.[25]

The same characteristic, coupled probably with the dangerous qualities of the many poisonous snakes of the country, led to the well-known prominence of snake cult and snake worship in India.[26] Far more widespread is the curious notion that the souls of dead men appear in snake form, a belief common in South Africa no less than in India and in Ancient Greece.[27] Aeneas is inclined to regard a snake creeping out of the tumulus of the dead Anchises as an incarnation of his ancestor’s ghost. If one remembers what an important part is played by the treasures buried with the dead, believed to belong to the dead and to be guarded by them, since they would naturally resent a violation of their tomb, it is clear how snakes and dragons came to assume the rôle of guardians of treasure. Traces of such a notion are found in many countries, in India no less than in Ancient Iceland. The treasure of Fafnir as well as the magic ring of a wide-spread fairy tale discussed above are derivatives of this curious notion. From treasure trove to the finding of hidden water is not a far cry, and it will be recalled that the divining rod may on occasion serve either purpose. Some such train of thought probably connected snakes with springs and with water in general. Hence the numerous tales hailing from various parts of the globe which relate how a dragon watches a spring and prevents the inhabitants from quenching their thirst.[28] Usually it requires a human victim in return for its permission to approach the spring, and it is finally slain by the hero.

The idea that the dead, whether in snake form or not, know more than the living may account for the well-nigh universal folk-tradition that attributes to snakes certain supernatural powers which they may even confer upon man as a boon. Thus Melampos, Kassandra and Helenos become seers after their ears have been cleansed by snakes, whereupon they are able to understand the cries of animals and all the sounds of nature. In particular, the ability to understand the language of animals is ascribed to snakes, and it may pass to man either as a free gift of the snake, as in the tale of the man who knows the languages of animals and of his curious wife, or by man's eating part of the snake's flesh, more especially its heart, as happens in the Norse story of Sigurd and Fafnir.

The belief that snakes are incarnations of dead ancestors accounts for the institution (if this term may be used) of the house snake, common in Ancient Rome but by no means unknown in Modern Europe.[29] The snake in question is of course a harmless one ; even so Pliny thought it a good thing that the fires of Rome, which from time to time wrought havoc among these snakes, diminished their number or at least prevented it from growing still larger.

By an extension of this notion, itself easy to understand once the character of the snake as a ' soul animal ' is grasped, it came to be identified as the seat of the soul even of persons still in life. That is, the lives of human beings were thought to be bound up mysteriously with certain snake specimens, so much so that the death of the snake would have for consequence the death of the individual in question. This belief is well attested for ancient Rome, but no less so for the ancient Semites, the Mediaeval and modern Germans, the Celts, and the Finnish tribes scattered over the territory of what was once the Russian Empire.[30]

What accounts for the identification of the dead ancestors with snakes is probably again a piece of good observation combined with false logic : a snake creeping out of a grave. What is certain is that snakes and toads, precisely on account of their mode of life, came to be chthonic animals *par excellence*, personifications of Mother Earth, and there can be little doubt that all earth-goddesses at one time were anguimorphous. At a later period, when the divinities everywhere sloughed off their animal skin, the snake remained as the sacred animal of the goddess, hence the sacred snakes in the sanctuaries of Athena and Demeter. Yet long after that period the snake continued to be regarded as the chthonic daemon, and when at the building of Vortigern's tower the materials disappear mysteriously and over night, Ambrosius-Merlin is not long in finding two dragons, a white one and a red one, in a subterranean pond. On the Continent the same story is told about the building of a cathedral ; but the snake is sometimes replaced by a toad.

The notion of snakes that may transform themselves into men at will and lead a vampire-like activity [31] is typically Indian. A certain type of tale knows of such a snake which transformed itself into a woman of rare beauty to marry a raja and to bring to rack and ruin his family and his unfortunate country. The story in question migrated, besides, and is found as far west as the Caucasus.[32]

A common European belief, though occurring also in Asia and America, hinges on the so-called snake-stone, that is, a precious jewel, sometimes a crown, which snakes (or one of them, the snake-king) are supposed to carry and which may be snatched away from them, though with the greatest danger for the bold man who attempts it.[33]

Lastly, mention should be made of the identification, in many parts of our globe, of the snake with the *membrum virile*, a curious notion, though based upon an association easy to understand, which is reflected in a number of legends. The famous story of Olympias, the mother of the great Alexander, and the snake-god visiting her, or the Roman imitations about the conception of Scipio Africanus the Younger and Octavianus Augustus, will at once come to mind.[34] It is well to note, too, that in the ancient mysteries celebrating a ἱερὸς γάμος the male principle was occasionally represented by a snake.

Among the amphibia the toad has many features in common with the snake, since the popular fancy has evinced a peculiar liking, or rather a dislike, for both animals. As most snakes are thought poisonous, so toads were credited with powers which they do not at all possess. As a matter of fact, the bite and touch of toads is generally believed to be dangerous. Exactly what led to the identification of the toad with the female organ [35] is anything but clear, since a good deal of primitive symbolism is as yet a closed book to us, unless indeed we accept the various psychological fancies put forward in recent years with no more plausibility than the sun and moon mythology of the late Max Müller.

The folk-lore of fish, though but imperfectly known, is none the less sufficiently old. At all events, the Pythagorean prohibitions and the curious lore reflected on the pages of the fairly credulous Plutarch [36] give us some notion of its character and meaning. What deserves to be emphasized is the fact that the notion of the Christian fast with its fish diet is neither Christian nor even Jewish but is derived directly from a fish taboo such as is known to have been in vogue in Syria, which is in turn closely connected with the Pythagorean prohibitions. How far such taboos existed outside of Syria, and particularly in the countries of the Occident, in pre-Christian times, is far from clear. Certain tale types, relating of men transformed into fish, may, in so far as they do not owe their present diffusion to migration, point to the existence of such taboos in former times.[37]

The lower animals, though naturally somewhat less prominent, still have their folk-lore. Insects, more particularly butterflies, are typical ‘ soul animals ’, a peculiarity which comes out clearly in the various names given to the butterfly in most European languages.[38] The spider may be an animal of good or of evil omen, according to the time of the day in which it shows itself.[39]

Mention has already been made of the theriomorphic divinities, all more or less connected with animal lore of some kind. When after the coming of Monotheism such deities were rudely identified with the Christian Devil, it was a natural consequence that quite a number of the animals formerly sacred to the inhabitants of Olympus and Walhal should now be devoted to the service of His Satanic Majesty. This is particularly true of the goat, very closely associated with the Devil. The chief reason is to be sought in the goat-shaped daemons of the ancient Mediterranean religion, gods like Pan, Faunus and the gay followers of Dionysos and partakers of his revels. Personifying, as they unquestionably do, the ever reproductive powers of nature, they were for that very reason held in especial abhorrence by the propagandists of the new faith ; and the goat, which, because of its amorous qualities, had been deemed worthy of representing the powers of life-giving nature, quite naturally passed into the service of the Devil, once Nature herself was considered as something satanic. At all events, I am inclined to believe that this set of ideas is fundamentally Mediterranean and that the goats of the Norse Thor are out of the game.

Whether generally speaking such pieces of animal lore originated independently or spread by migration is a problem which cannot be solved in a summary manner but must be decided from case to case. It is certain, however, that migration will account largely for the diffusion of a good number, probably of a majority, of them. What is urgently needed are charts indicating the geographical location of each. By a careful comparison of the distribution and the historical source material, so far as it exists, it should be possible to arrive at some conclusion.

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[16] E. Freymond, *Artus' Kampf mit dem Katzenungetüm*, in *Beiträge zur rom. Philologie*, Festgabe für Gustav Gröber, Halle, 1899, pp. 311–96. Cf. also Taylor, *op. cit.*, pp. 60 sqq.

[17] F. Liebrecht, *Zur Volkskunde*, Heilbronn, 1879, p. 1 sqq.

[18] This obvious explanation is quite old, having been proposed by Celsus himself; cf. Louis Rougier, *Celse*, Paris (1925), p. 253.

[19] J. Rendel Harris, *Boanerges*, Cambridge, 1913, pp. 20 sqq.

[20] *Etudes*, pp. 36.

[21] Cf. J. Scheftelowitz, *Die altpersische Religion und das Judentum*, Giessen, 1920, p. 86.

[22] J. Rendel Harris, *Picus Who is also Zeus*, Cambridge, 1916.

[23] *M.L.R.*, XXI, 70 sqq.

[24] G. Weicker, *Der Seelenvogel in der alten Literatur und Kunst*, Leipzig, 1902, *Balor*, pp. 95 sqq.

[25] Sir J. G. Frazer, *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament*, London, 1918, I, 45 sqq.; *A.J.S.L.L.*, XLIII, 236–9; *N.T.T.*, XVII, 242–9. Cf. also the Italian phrase "aver più anni d'un serpente."

[26] C. S. Wake, *Serpent Worship and Other Essays*, London, 1888.

[27] Sir J. G. Frazer, Apollodorus, *The Library*, London, 1921, I, 334 sq.

[28] E. S. Hartland, *Perseus*, London, 1894–6, III, 73 sq.

[29] Cf. Bolte-Polívka, II, 459 sqq.; O. Schrader, *Reallexikon*, I, 23.

[30] Hartland, *Perseus*, II, 44; Huet, p. 123; Naumann, pp. 99, 104; E. Cosquin, *Contes populaires de Lorraine*, Paris, 1886, I, 176–7; II, 144–356; Chauvin, V, 235; VI, 88; VII, 67; Schrader, *op. et loc. cit.*; Hopf, p. 187; E. L. Rochholz, *Schweizersagen aus dem Aargau*, Aarau, 1856–7, I, 146; II, 111; Paul Drechsler, *Sitte, Brauch und Volksglaube in Schlesien*, Leipzig, 1903–6, II, 181 sq.; F. von der Leyen, *Das Märchen* (1917), p. 59; K. F. Karjalainen, *Die Religion der Jugravölker*, 1921–2 (*F.F.C.* 41, 44), I, 45; J. Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums*, Berlin, 1897, p. 153.

[31] *R.T.P.*, XXV, 14; cf. G. Huet, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

[32] A. v. Haxthausen, *Transkaukasia*, Leipzig, 1856, I, 125.

[33] Aarne-Thompson, p. 108, No. 672. Cf. also D. G. Brinton, *The Myths of the New World*,[3] Philadelphia, 1896, p. 137; Lewis Spence, *The Myths of the North American Indians*, London, 1914, p. 248.

[34] Cf. my study *Othin and Gunnlödh*, in *Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni*, IV (1928), pp. 64 sqq.; *Etudes*, pp. 59 sqq.

[35] *Mitra*, I, col, 209 sqq.

[36] Cf. Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, I, s.v. *Animals*.

[37] Cf. my *Balor*, p. 78, further, the Spanish legend of the city of Lucerna, on which see J. Bédier, *Les Légendes épiques*, III, 152, and a story in the *Arabian Nights*, Chauvin, VI, 56.

[38] H. Güntert, *Kalypso*, Halle, 1919, pp. 213 sqq.

[39] R. Riegler, *Spinnenmythus und Spinnenaberglaube in der neueren Erzählungsliteratur*, *S.A.V.*, XXVI, 127–42.

CHAPTER XIV

MINERAL LORE, STAR LORE, COSMOGONIC LEGENDS

IT would be erroneous to suppose that plant and animal lore owe their existence to the mystery of life. On the contrary, it is very likely that the distinction between organic and inorganic nature is itself the consequence of mental processes of a fairly advanced nature, and the more or less veiled contempt with which missionaries of one of the higher creeds look upon savages primitive enough to revere dumb nature is therefore essentially a proof of their own ignorance of man's spiritual evolution.

The worship of rude stones is very widespread on our planet and, more important still, is clearly distinguishable at the base of religions which, in their later development, show no mean capacity for artistic beauty if not for reasoning intelligence. The Greek Hermes, to quote just one familiar example, was in his origins but a rude stone, and so was, in all probability, the Asiatic Kybele who in precisely this form was carried to Rome, in the latter part of the Second Punic War, and there worshipped, with the retention of her Eastern rites, down to the end of Paganism. Nor can the stone of Beth-El, anointed by Jacob, be altogether separated from this set of curious beliefs and practices.

Of a higher level, presupposing indeed some scientific outlook, however faulty to our minds, is the curious mineral lore as represented in the Mediaeval lapidaries.[1] The pseudo-science displayed in these compilations has, like most pseudo-sciences, an Oriental origin. A good portion of that lore was current in classical antiquity, as may be judged from the specimens given by pseudo-Aristotle, Pliny and other ancient authors of *mirabilia*. This ancient lore was transmitted to the Middle Ages, with numerous accretions of more recent Eastern provenance. The minerals treated are either well-known precious stones, which are credited with certain miraculous powers, such as that of making the bearer invisible, or of protecting him against fire or water, or of warning him against approaching dangers ; or else they are entirely fabulous and have no more existence in reality than the Phoenix bird. To the latter group belongs the famous philosopher's stone, no doubt identical with the ' stone of hidden power ', the *lapis exilis* of Wolfram.[2] Various stones even entered the Mediaeval pharmacopoeia as sure remedies against a variety of diseases the real character of which was quite as unknown to the Mediaeval physicians as were the mineralogical qualities of the stones in question. In the Near East matters have not changed materially, and the belief in the curative powers of certain stones is still a living force in those countries. In Europe this pseudo-science has left no trace except the symbolism of precious stones, according to which each stone symbolizes a certain quality of character and is linked up with the horoscope and the planetary signs still believed in by those who consider faith the better part of reason.

To presuppose a genuinely popular basis for the Mediaeval lapidaries would be as vain as to exclude such beliefs and superstitions from the domain of folk-lore on the pretext that they are obviously of learned provenance. Much the same state of things holds for the kindred domain of star lore. Obviously, two different strata can be distinguished with ease. On the one hand we have genuine star *myths* (to use this ambiguous term), i.e. tales about the heavenly bodies, usually of the aetiological type. On the other hand we have counterfeited star myths—witness the comet identified with the dead Caesar or the constellation called Berenice's Hair,[3]—the invention of court poets, and the planetary lore which formed the main body of astrology from antiquity down to relatively modern times.[4] The latter has become popular in a certain sense, since the noble pseudo-science of Seni and Tycho Brahe has decidedly fallen, socially, and is now accessible to any farmer in the form of sixpenny booklets sold at fairs.

There is little need to go into the mass of astrological lore. The field is most interesting, extremely important from the standpoint of culture-history, and quite a discipline by itself, though intimately connected both with the history of religion and the origins of astronomy. Nor are modern scientific studies of it wanting. The genuinely popular star lore, however, deserves some mention, especially in this country, since the English reader may well ask what is left of the fancies of Max Müller even in the opinion of specialists who cannot claim to belong to the Anthropological School.

As one approaches the body of astronomical myths one gains at once an impression that these are in the main aetiological tales. The sun's light is quite different from the light of the moon ; the sun shines by day, the moon and the stars by night. Most of the stars are arranged in clusters which we call constellations. All these facts (and many others) suggest the question, Why? And in his usual way man has tried to answer these questions, not by scientific investigation and reasoning—these belong to a far later stage of his spiritual development—but by inventing a good story. Hence the many tales of a marriage of sun and moon, ending—like many human marriages,—if not in the divorce court, at least in mutual estrangement. Or, combining the phases of the moon with the host of the stars, man came to invent the jolly story, made famous by Heine, of how the old moon is broken to pieces by the *bon Dieu* and the stars made out of the fragments. If the constellation of the Pleiades reminds the peasant of a hen with her chickens, such fancy is perhaps not even particularly extravagant, and if the Milky Way is likened to a great pilgrim road, the notion, though perhaps an importation from the Orient, is yet understandable,[5] and one might even argue that it could have arisen independently. Once such mythological fancies existed, it was a comparatively easy matter to transpose earthly figures, men, heroes, and even gods of the Olympian type, to the sky, the best example being the Greek Orion and the Norse *Toe of Aurwandil.*

The best proof of the essential correctness of my contention is furnished by the existence of numerous aetiological star tales which have nothing mythological about them. Thus a Basque legend will explain the constellation of the Dipper as follows [6]:

> Once upon a time there was a wealthy farmer who was robbed of a pair of his oxen by two thieves. He sent his servant in pursuit of the robbers; when the servant did not return he sent his servant girl after him. As she did not appear either, he sent his little dog; and a few days later when neither servant nor girl nor dog had returned, he went himself in search of them. Finding them nowhere, he began to curse and swear. As a punishment they were all, farmer, servants, dog and thieves, as well as the stolen oxen, converted into stars and lifted up into the sky where they are doomed to walk in procession until the day of doom. Thus arose the constellation of the Dipper; the oxen are the first two stars, the thieves the next two, whilst the servant, the girl, the dog and the farmer are the four stars forming the handle.

With this story should be compared the 'myth' reported by Hyginus [7]:

> The Athenian Icarius, having been taught by Dionysus how to grow grape vine, gave some of his wine to some shepherds. Having got drunk, they thought that he had poisoned them and killed him. His dog went to fetch Erigone, his daughter, and showed her the place

where the corpse was lying. In her despair she hanged herself, whilst the dog let himself die near his master's corpse. Then the gods put the three in the sky together with the wine cart. Erigone forms the constellation of the Virgin ; the dog is Sirius, Icarius is the Cowherd, and the cart is the Dipper.

Now it may be admitted that in a polytheistic society such as that of the ancient Greeks, gods and heroes were more apt to be made the subjects of a catasterism than humble mortals such as the Basque farmer. Yet granting all this, we are still far from an astral mythology in the sense of Max Müller, E. Siecke, and their followers. By the process of a catasterism, just referred to, genuine gods *may* invade the heavens, and a similar process is even more obvious in the history of the Chaldaean astral religion in which ancient Mesopotamian and later even the Hellenic Olympians had to do service in the nightly sky. Yet there cannot exist the slightest doubt that in all these cases the astral connexions of such gods are secondary. We have no proof whatever that the reverse ever took place and that stars became anthropomorphic gods. We have examples of sun-gods, in Ancient Egypt, in the late Roman Empire, in Ireland, and among the Indians of Peru. Yet even there we are either dealing with an advanced civilization and an agricultural, stationary population, or—as in the case of Ireland [8]—with an obvious transposition of creeds from the Mediterranean.[9] Nor is the case much different with the ancient Mesopotamian moon-god. An agricultural people, governed on the monarchical principle, will naturally look to the sun as the life-giving deity, and the moon may, temporarily at least, gain a certain importance from the fact that in the reckoning of time it precedes the sun and the fairly complicated solar year. But the chief claim of the moon mythologists,[10] that a moon cult and a moon worship must in all cases have preceded a sun cult and a sun worship, is entirely unfounded and not apt to be substantiated in the near future.

Aetiological myths constitute the overwhelming majority of the body of stories which formed the delight of the professional mythologist and which induced him to build up the most daring structures. As science advanced, the aetiological myths lost credence and gradually disappeared, unless protected by some powerful religious system which had incorporated them for one reason or another. The eternal question, Why ? so easy to put and so difficult to answer, can be proposed and has been proposed in all fields of human knowledge, in zoology and botany no less than in astronomy, or rather, these disciplines have arisen in answer to those questions. Yet the same question may be put, and has been put, as to the origin of the visible universe, though not as to its *raison d'être* (no doubt because this would tax to the utmost the imagination of even the most fanciful of human beings), and the result is seen in the various cosmogonic myths which have come down to us.

A cosmogonic myth is simply an aetiological tale purporting to explain how the world was created or arose out of the Nothing or out of the Chaos.[11] The usual solution is the *a priori* assumption of a personal creator, a *τεχνίτης* who set to work, sometimes more or less diffidently, until he saw that what he had made 'was good'. The best specimen for this type is, of course, the Semitic myth as told in *Genesis*. The Iranian and Orphic myths stand fairly close, except that the dualistic system takes the place of the unitarian, and the Devil has as large a share in the creation as has the Deity.[12] The Greeks and the Scandinavians alone, it appears, started with a concept sufficiently free from theistic preconceptions, though neither managed to dispense altogether with the *τεχνίτης*. The idea of an organic Universe does not occur in pre-philosophic times, and that wonderful introduction of Pliny's *Natural History* would be unthinkable in any but the very highest of civilizations. In Western Europe one has to wait until the beginning of the eighteenth century to find anything approaching it in boldness of conception and grandeur of language.

One more caution is necessary. Aetiological tales of the ordinary type may be considered as the outcome of an individual brain, though diffusion no doubt often enough led to modification. The cosmogonic myths of the known world are systems and presuppose as a rule the harmonic co-operation of a multitude of brains. One need not go so far as Creuzer who everywhere saw ancient schools of philosophers and religious thinkers at work. Yet this much is certain, that we should possess neither the first chapters of *Genesis*, nor the body of Iranian creation myths, nor the Hesiodic theogony, nor even the corresponding chapters of the *Gylfaginning* without a certain body of priests or poets—or both—who not only invented aetiological tales of this type but organized and co-ordinated older material and above all expressed these conceptions in a language of literary beauty that cannot be spoiled even by translations into alien tongues. What is certain is that the fortune of such systems was not made by their scientific accuracy—that quality could recommend the book of *Genesis* only to a type of mind for which it was not written in the first place—nor by their purely dogmatic import, the rewards promised to the believer and the punishments threatened to the unbeliever—such rewards and punishments are nowhere mentioned either in *Genesis* itself or in the later books of the Old Testament—but solely by the poetic beauty of the text. And what is true of *Genesis* is equally so of the Hesiodic poem and of Snorri's fine and energetic, though simple, prose.

At the other end of the scale, as a sort of antithesis to the creation, stands the idea that the earth and the whole visible universe are bound to perish some day in the distant future.[13] The psychological basis behind it (as behind the creation myths) is of course the all too earthly experience that everything must have a beginning and an end. Yet it is a noteworthy fact that quite a number of peoples have constructed hypotheses on the subject of the creation, whilst but few have thought it worth their while to ponder over the sorry fact that the beautiful show here on earth must some time come to an end. The ancient Israelites, though possessors of quite an elaborate creation legend, knew nothing about a world catastrophe. On the contrary, from Jahveh's solemn promise in *Genesis* ix. 11 sqq. it may be inferred that they held the optimistic view that the earth is going to last for ever, a view unfortunately not borne out by modern science. Even the Babylonians, with their theory of the 'Great Year' and its regularly recurring world-catastrophes whenever all the planets stand in the signs of Cancer and Capricorn respectively, cannot be said to have anticipated an end of the world for good and all. Their cosmogony allows us to suppose that after every catastrophe things were started afresh and went on as merrily as before.

The notion that after the end of the visible universe another and better world of everlasting bliss was taking its inception appears to be of Iranian origin and closely connected with the strange dualism peculiar to that country. Accordingly, it was the Iranians who elaborated the details of the coming catastrophe, pointing out the signs and omens of its coming, its nature, etc. A few of these, namely, the general wickedness at the end of time, the long and hard winter, and the final conflagration, promptly migrated westward, the first and third recurring in the Jewish and Christian apocalypses, the second and third in the Norse conception of the so-called 'Twilight of the Gods'. Nor is there any reasonable doubt about the fact that the so-called Anti-Christ and the Icelandic Surtr find their prototype in the Iranian Agramanyush. If in the *Vǫluspá* there arises another world of everlasting bliss, there is no need whatever to think of the heavenly Jerusalem; for precisely the same notion existed in Iran long before the advent of Christianity and probably migrated to the Germanic North together with the other eschatological elements.

NOTES TO CHAPTER XIV

[1] I. Evans, *Magical Jewels of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, particularly in England*, Oxford, 1922; Paul Studer and Joan Evans, *Anglo-Norman Lapidaries*, Paris, 1924; G. F. Kunz, *The Magic of Jewels and Charms*, Philadelphia, 1915.

[2] Cf. *Z.D.Ph.*, LIV, 277 sqq.

[3] U. v. Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Reden und Vorträge*, Berlin, 1925.

[4] Hugo Gressmann, *Die hellenistische Gestirnreligion*, Leipzig, 1925 (Suppl. 5 to *Der Alte Orient*); A. Maury, *La Magie et l'astrologie dans l'antiquité et au moyen âge*, Paris, 1877; F. Boll, *Sternglaube und Sterndeutung*, Leipzig, 1918.

[5] J. Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,[4] I, 296; III, 106, 280.

[6] J. F. Cerquand, *Légendes et récits populaires du pays basque*, Pau, 1875–82, p. 19.

[7] Hyg. *Fab.*, 130.

[8] Cf. especially the recent book of Dr. R. S. Loomis, *Celtic Myth and Arthurian Romance*, New York, 1927.

[9] Cf. F. Boll, *Die Sonne im Glauben und in der Weltanschauung der alten Völker*, Stuttgart, 1922.

[10] Ernst Siecke, *Mythologische Briefe*, Berlin, 1901; *Drachenkämpfe*, Leipzig, 1907.

[11] H. Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit*, Göttingen, 1895.

[12] Cf. O. Dähnhardt, *Natursagen*, Leipzig-Berlin, 1907–12, I, 1 sqq.

[13] Gunkel, *op. cit.*; K. Ziegler u. S. Oppenheim, *Weltuntergang in Sage und Wissenschaft*, Leipzig, 1921; Gustav Neckel, *Studien zu den germanischen Dichtungen vom Weltuntergang*, in *Sitzungsber. d. Heidelberger Akademie d. Wissensch., phil.-hist. Kl.*, IX, No. 7, Heidelberg, 1918.

CHAPTER XV

CUSTOM AND RITUAL

IT was the habit of the older school of folklorists and mythologists to approach the problem exclusively from the literary, the oral, side. That method had certain decided disadvantages. In the case of the ancient Greek religion, for example, the oral side meant Homer and Hesiod (with their derivatives). The result was that the whole body of the Hellenic religion appeared, naturally enough, as a sort of magnificent carnival, a kind of prehistoric Versailles, where, if everything was not for the best in the best of all possible worlds, things were pleasant, at least for those in power, that is, the Olympians and their protégés. The darker side of the Apolline religion disappeared, as it were, and the hero cults as well as the cults of the chthonic divinities with their ominous survivals were passed over in silence. Since the days of Friedrich Nietzsche, the first to draw attention to the Dionysiac side of Greek religion, methods have changed, and the cult, i.e. the cult *practice*, now claims the chief attention of the investigator.

As a matter of fact, the discrepancy just noted between *μῦθος* and *δϱώμενα* is not always so prominent as it happens to be in the case of the ancient Hellenic religion. There it is largely the consequence of the Ionic poetry with its flights of fancy of which the Olympians came to be the victims. As we pass over to the chthonic deities the discrepancy becomes less pronounced, for the simple reason that Homer left them severely alone. Yet it is true all the same that belief and practice need a constant checking up the one by the other, if only as a measure of precaution.

A German scholar of the last generation and an historian of literature who, like many of his colleagues, was somewhat obsessed by the dangers of the study of folk-lore, once pointed out that folklorists are too prone to exaggerate the significance of their finds and that if the numerous survivals actually had the importance with which he believed folklorists credited them, the countryside would look somewhat like a huge insane asylum. The observation is perfectly correct, though based upon a gross misconception of what folklorists actually do believe to be the case. The reason is to be sought in precisely that discrepancy between theory and practice.

A peasant may hold a certain belief and even communicate it, with the greatest frankness, to the collector. Yet when it comes to practising the corresponding rite, matters are quite different. For one thing, the great majority of beliefs are latent, as it were, and would never, under normal circumstances, find an outlet in actual practice. That is, they represent remedies to be resorted to on extraordinary occasions, in times of war, epidemic, and other great crises of comparatively rare occurrence. Even then the ordinary man will much rather pay a professional, a wizard or witch, for his services than perform them himself, if for no other reason, at least from fear of not doing the act right. It is equally natural that when such a system becomes obsolete, the practice will as a rule be the first to go, whilst the belief, pure theory, lingers longer. A case in point is the so-called foundation sacrifice. It is safe to say that, so far as human victims are concerned, it has not been carried out for centuries, in Western and Central Europe, yet the reminiscences are alive everywhere. The belief still exists, though the practice has disappeared.

On the other hand, the practice may, in certain cases, survive the belief which gave it life, that is, a given rite may be continued, from man's innate conservatism, though the original reason or purpose has long been forgotten. Often enough a new reason is invented and alleged to explain such a practice. A case in point is the well-known custom of uncovering one's head on passing a bier. This practice is now interpreted as a mark of respect shown to the dead. Yet its origin is quite different. In former times the bier was preceded by a cross before which all men had to take off their head-gear. With the coming of Protestantism the cross and the practice disappeared, yet in the case of a bier it was so ingrained that it stayed, though it is now understood as a remark of respect not for the cross (which often enough has disappeared likewise) but for the dead.

The body of customs and rites may be divided into three classes: (1) rites connected with definite days and seasons of the solar year[1]; (2) rites observed on definite occasions such as birth, marriage, and death[2]; and (3) special rites of aversion and avoidance.[3]

The two central points of the solar year—in the temperate zones at all events—are the two solstices; hence the significance of St. John's Day and Christmas. Over large areas of Europe and Asia these two days were fire festivals, either because the fires were supposed to have some magic influence on the sun or merely because of the general purificatory power ascribed to fire. The dates and rites were observed in the Mediterranean countries and in Germany and Scandinavia. Strangely enough, the Celts of Western Europe had a different calendar, the important dates being 1st February, 1st May, 1st August, and 1st November. The astronomical basis of this calendar and its origin are far from clear; yet like the pagan Roman and Teutonic festivals they have left their traces in the Christian calendar, with the feasts of Candlemas, Walpurgis, the bank holiday on August 1st, and Hallow E'en. The observances on these days have for a long time been visibly on the decline. Take May-day, for example. Throughout the Middle Ages it was a regular feast-day both in England and on the Continent. People went out 'a-maying', and it will be recalled that the emperor Albert I was slain by his nephew on such an occasion. May-poles were erected and there were fairs and dancing. As late as the eighteenth century, when Voltaire first set foot on English soil, he chanced to run across such a festivity showing Merry Old England at her best, and he thought it worth his while to report the matter to France. The old Celtic feast of Lugnasad, on August 1st, so important for the whole Celtic world that Augustus, after the pacification of Gaul, thought it best to leave it untouched, merely Romanizing it a little, has in recent years been resuscitated in Ireland. Yet even in Wales Nonconformity had not succeeded in killing it altogether when toward the end of the last century Sir John Rhŷs collected what is left of the old Welsh traditions,[4] and in England it was observed under the name of Lammas Day down to Shakespeare's time, if not later still.

We do not know what pagan festival lurks behind St. Bartholomew's Day (24th August), the day of the Smithfield Fair with its roasted pigs. It is curious to note that the day plays an equal rôle on the Continent. By St. Bartholomew's the wheat and rye-harvest is ended, and the wind must be blowing over the stubbles. The days of All Saints and All Souls, both mediaeval institutions, were unquestionably meant to be substitutes for pagan Celtic observances which still lingered on. The festival of the Epiphany (6th January) is a survival of the older Christmas Day which, in the fourth century, was transposed to the 25th of December, the birthday of the *Sol Invictus*.[5] The carnival is of South European origin and was originally connected with the opening of navigation each spring, although the derivation of the word, from *carrus navalis*, the ship of the goddess of navigation, Isis in the Mediterranean, Nehalennia in Northern Europe, must be given up.[6] Nor can there be much doubt about the fundamental fact that the Greek Kronia, the Roman Saturnalia, have left their impress upon the mediaeval and modern carnival.[7]

The period of Lent with its long fast is likewise a pre-Christian institution and cannot be separated from the fasts imposed upon many primitive agriculturists about seed-time.[8] This fast is supposed to have a good effect upon the year's crop. The Church was satisfied with giving a different meaning to the old custom, and no doubt it generalized it also, introducing it into regions where it had been unknown or less known before. The history of Easter and Whitsuntide would deserve as good a monograph as H. Usener devoted to the history of Christmas.[9] So far little is known about possible pre-Christian observances that might be claimed as predecessors of these Christian holidays, the Anglo-Saxon goddess Eostere being entirely hypothetical. As a general rule, the continuity of seasonal festivals may be postulated, if a definite and reasonably solid basis can be found. Yet it is wise, methodologically, to envisage the possibility of arbitrary innovations, from historical causes; witness the English Guy Fawkes' Day, now on its decline, the various National Holidays, and the American Thanksgiving. That similar causes were operative also in the Middle Ages, except that the Church played the part now enjoyed by Nationalism, is proved by the institution of such days as Holyrood Day (14th September), the anniversary of the recovery of the 'true' cross by the emperor Heraclius.

The rites themselves are necessarily of a limited variety and as a rule forever recurring. The kindling of fires and the purification of men and animals existed in antiquity (witness the Roman Palilia) as they do now. Nor is there any reason to suppose them to have varied in meaning and purpose. Processions through the fields were no more unknown to the Roman farmer than to the Central and West European agriculturist of our days. Contests between Winter and Summer, in springtide, mummers' plays and races were common in antiquity as in the Middle Ages and modern times. Many of them have left their traces in myth and legend.[10] We may also cite the carrying-out of Death, known all over Western and Central Europe, and the burning of Judas or simply of the witches (Witches' Day in Bohemia); Death, Judas and the witches merely represent the Old Year which must be destroyed ceremonially.

A common ceremony is the ritual beating practised on various occasions, usually in springtime.[11] It is supposed to have rejuvenating and fertilizing powers. The wassailing of fruit-trees about the time of the winter solstice is based on much the same principle.

The interrelationship between human and vegetal fertility has always been prominent in man's mind, a fact which explains the peculiarity of many savage and barbaric societies of entrusting the farm labour chiefly, if not exclusively, to the women. It also accounts for the rite of the human wedding in the freshly ploughed field, a rite common in Ancient Greece no less than in Modern Europe, and here too we find the origin of the famous myth of Demeter and Iasion.[12]

In a number of cases the ritual combat is (or was) combined with the ritual wedding in the ploughed field. The acting personages were then representatives of Mother Earth (a woman, later a boy dressed up as a woman), the Old Year or ' Winter ', and the New Year or ' Spring '. The action of the play was as follows : Winter and Spring engaged in a combat for the possession of the woman, in the course of which the former was slain by the latter, who married the woman. Sometimes the play was more complicated and Winter killed Spring, but the latter was resuscitated or lived again in the person of a young boy (a fourth actor) who promptly slew the daemon of Winter. Rites of this type have been preserved to this day, and their existence cannot very well be doubted. When they came to be no longer understood they were elaborated into myths, and thus arose, in Greece, the stories of Oedipus who slays his father and marries his mother,[13] or of Perseus, who slays his grandfather, whilst in Ireland we have the famous story of Balor with the Evil Eye, originally the Irish Kronos, the daemon of Winter and the Old Year, who slays his son-in-law and is himself slain by his grandson.[14] Sometimes, also, the two fighting daemons were regarded not as father and son or father and son-in-law, but as fighting twin-brothers, in which case we obtain myths of the type of the Norse story of Balder and Hǫðr and the former's avenger Vali, or the Egyptian myth of Osiris and Set, Osiris's avenger being his posthumous son Horus. In all these stories the woman, call her Iokaste, Ethnea, Nanna, or Isis, is but a personification of Mother Earth, the fruit-bearing earth of the agricultural community.

Fasting is essentially a seasonal rite, though unquestionably older than agriculture.[15] Tribes living on fishing and hunting know it no less than agriculturists. It often goes hand in hand with a certain amount of self-abasement, as in the Babylonian Sacaea, no doubt likewise a festival closely connected with seed-time and the expected crops, and the Christian Ash Wednesday.[16]

The procession of a ship on wheels (*carrus navalis*), known in antiquity, has survived in the countries of the Lower Rhine, that is, parts of Belgium, Holland and Western Germany. It is no doubt a variety of the procession of a chariot, with or without a divinity, such as is described by Tacitus or may be inferred both for Ancient Greece and mediaeval Sweden from a number of documents.[17]

Examples of ritual combat live on in many parts of Western and Central Europe, to say nothing of the Orient. The French *behourdis* of Laetare Sunday is a case in point. The place of the combat may be taken by a race, sometimes a torch race. Both rites, combat and race, were common in classical antiquity and have left their impress on the classical stories of Kadmos and Iason.

A special type of ritual combat is the ceremony of the so-called lithobolia or ritual stone-throwing, which has left its trace not only in the two classical legends just quoted but also in the Norse story of Othin and Gunnlǫð.[18] More remarkable yet, it is still practised to this day by the Mecca pilgrims, though the person against whom it is supposed to be directed is of course 'the Devil'. One might well think it a good thing that the Devil exists. Were he not there, he would have to be invented, if only to explain such survivals, otherwise most shocking to the orthodox.

Nor can one accept as the only possible one[19] the usual interpretation of the baptismal rite as signifying a ceremonial cleaning. The idea of purification no doubt existed in fairly remote times. Yet equally old is the conception of water as the fertilizing element, and the ritual ducking observable in many a rural celebration was probably quite as potent.

The exceedingly large number of harvest rites, first studied systematically by Wilhelm Mannhardt, which have their analogues in ancient Greece and Rome, would fill a volume all by themselves, as would also the ceremonies connected with the vintage, if traced down from the ancient *Karneia* to the vintage festivals of modern France and Italy. Suffice it to say that the fundamental idea underlying them all is again that of fertility, as a rule with reference to next year's harvest.[20]

Lastly a word should be added about certain autumn festivals, with St. Martin's Night as a sort of climax, which owe their origin to the ancient custom of slaughtering the domestic animals at that time of the year because the economic system then prevailing did not make allowance for feeding, at least on a large scale, during the winter.[21] For economic reasons the autumn was also the usual time for the conclusion of marriages, a system which comes out most clearly in the Icelandic sagas.[22] This latter fact is indicative of the close relationship that is bound to exist, in agricultural communities, between the festive year with its seasons and the life of the villager, a consideration which will naturally lead us to a discussion of the various rites and customs which go far to make up rural life.[23]

The event of a birth, though it cannot be classed among the 'abnormal' incidents which naturally cause horror or fear, is at least extraordinary enough to excite such feelings and to recommend various precautions. The mother is ceremonially unclean, a belief connected with the general fear of woman and menstrual blood. She is therefore debarred from the ordinary pursuits of life, at least until she has been cleansed by her first visit to a church. In many regions, and in the eighteenth century throughout Europe, she was, or still is, enjoined not to leave the house unless she has first gone once to church, preferably on a Sunday. This first church visit, called *les relévailles* in France, is a little festival by itself, and a present must be given to the midwife on that occasion. Until it has taken place, the life of the mother is threatened by various dangers more or less vaguely apprehended. She is particularly liable to be carried off by the fairies, hence the precaution of keeping a burning candle by her bedside. Fire is potent enough to keep away the fairy folk. A number of tales inculcate the advisability of this precaution by relating how the young mother disappeared, the saving candle having been allowed to go out. The new-born child is no less subject to various dangers, the most common of which is likewise that of being carried off by the fairies anxious to make it their own and to leave in its place a changeling. How real this superstition is may be seen from a number of criminal cases, in quite recent times, in which a child had been most cruelly treated because it was believed to be such a changeling.[24] As a matter of fact, the baby cannot be regarded as perfectly 'safe' until it has been properly initiated into the class to which it belongs. The ceremony in question is, in Europe at least, the Christian baptism, which is thus given a meaning it is far from having according to the dogmas of the various Christian denominations. In pre-Christian times the rite consisted in carrying the child around the domestic hearth, three or even nine times, *with* the sun, of course, the opposite being decidedly unlucky.[25]

Various other steps call forth customs and rites of more or less consequence, as when the child has its first tooth, or when it first goes to school, or when it is 'confirmed'. Yet in the Islamic countries only does a ceremony of greater consequence, that is, circumcision, clearly indicate that the boy enters from one class into another.[26] In savage and barbaric societies this step is a most important one, only those which have undergone the ceremony being accounted as 'men' and thereby permitted to marry. In Europe, as indicated, this set of rites has either disappeared or been weakened with the progress of civilization. Yet the mediaeval youth, if a member of the nobility, underwent a series of rites of the same content and meaning on his initiation into the order of knighthood. The custom, so charmingly satirized by Cervantes, lives on, on the European continent, in the guard regiments of certain armies, in Spain, for example. Nor is it possible to dissociate altogether from this train of ideas the various initiatory rites of secret societies such as flourish on the other side of the Atlantic.

Some of the rites in question may appear to us extremely puerile, for the very simple reason that we have outgrown them. If one takes a more historical view of the matter, they will be far less so. There can be no question, for instance, that the ritual watch of the Knight of the Mancha in the yard of the village inn and the whole custom satirized by this episode had its origin in a test of courage; no doubt, at the beginning of the institution of chivalry, essentially Teutonic, the candidate was frightened in much the same way as the savage youth still is during the ceremony of initiation. But the various tests of endurance also have good reasons behind them. One cannot help thinking, for example, that the Orinoco Indians, when they require a young man to lie still, for a day or two, in a sack filled with fire-ants, before they will allow him to contract a marriage, know very well what they are doing and that a similar 'initiation' rite among white people might considerably reduce the divorce rate.

Marriage is indeed considered universally as a most important step in human life, as it no doubt is, especially in societies where monogamy prevails and divorce is difficult and expensive. In the Mohammedan East, on the other hand, it has in many cases been weakened quite as much as the puberty rites have been weakened in Europe, and a similar development is observable in present-day America, no doubt for closely related reasons.

Yet in purely rural districts the human marriage is still a complicated affair, implying a whole set of rites and ceremonies. As one studies them, one gains an impression that the ecclesiastical part of them has been grafted upon a far older set of customs, that both pagan and Christian elements have been almost inextricably interwoven, so that it is often extremely difficult to distinguish the old from the new. Generally speaking, one may say that two particular fears are at the root of all of them, first the fear of the woman, credited with supernatural powers among all savage and barbaric peoples, and second the fear of invisible and vague powers threatening the bridal couple on this important occasion. From the first [27] of these two fears grew such strange customs as the deflowering of the bride by artificial means or by calling in the help of a stranger, customs which survived in the famous *ius primae noctis* (which, to be sure, was at first an *onus* rather than a *ius*) and in a curious fairy-tale type of which the Old Testament *Book of Tobit* furnished one of the oldest variants. The second fear, which was far slower in dying, accounts for the many apotropaeic rites, rites of avoidance. The bridal veil is a case in point, being evidently meant to protect the wearer from the evil eye. The noise made by the guests, according to a well-established custom of Central Europe, on the eve before a wedding, is meant to drive away evil spirits. The wedding ring itself, though now little more than a symbol, was originally to have a concrete effect upon the wearer and her relationship to her partner. I say ' her ', because the English (and American) custom according to which the woman alone wears a wedding ring represents the older stage ; the continental custom, giving a ring to both the wife and the husband, is a late innovation and arose from the afterthought that marriage is a contract imposing equal obligations on both contracting parties, an idea not dreamt of by the older society. It is thus a close analogy to the development of the word ' widower ' and its equivalents in other languages. They are all new formations derived from ' widow ', which is the original word, precisely because the death of the husband imposed certain observations upon the surviving wife, whilst the death of the wife imposed none whatever upon the surviving husband, so that the latter distinguished himself very little from the rest of the males of the community and no word was needed to designate him especially.[28]

Nor does the example just given constitute the only close parallelism between marriage and death, and the last rites that can be given to a human being are generally considered as important as, though somewhat more grave than, the rites accompanying the union of a new couple. The mystery of death would no doubt suffice to give them a character of their own. As a matter of fact, quite a number of different ' leading ' ideas may be discerned in the various funeral customs that have been noted down all over the inhabited globe. Most general, perhaps, is the notion that a corpse is ceremonially unclean and that a death renders ceremonially unclean all the members of the family. This idea is at the base of all chthonic cults, which are, essentially, cults of the dead. Special rites are therefore imposed upon the living before they can hope to resume normal intercourse with the other members of the community. The same uncleanliness clings to the possessions of the dead man, more especially to his garments. This notion led to the wholesale destruction of property after a death, a custom still observed among many savage and barbaric races, and to this day Europeans and Americans do not relish the idea of wearing the clothes which once belonged to a person deceased.

Of later origin, though to be sure primitive enough, is the notion that the dead ' envy ' the living and hence persecute them, not only their former enemies (which would be quite logical), but also their friends and relations. This idea is at the base of the belief in vampirism discussed in a previous chapter. It was also instrumental in the establishment of a set of funeral rites of considerable diffusion. One of these is the funeral games, interpreted, in a period of growing civilization, as a last honour bestowed upon the dead man. In reality they originated with mock-fights, having the very serious purpose of frightening the ghost away. Among savages the duty of this mock-fight rests with the relations of the deceased. In a later development the fight is carried out by hired men, and this custom is thus unquestionably at the root of the Roman gladiatorial combats.[29]

A more advanced stage of civilization is reached when the dead are thought to be propitiated rather than frightened away. This act of propitiation may be rather crude, as when the dead man's property, among it also his wives and slaves, is sacrificed to his ghost. It may be more refined, as when, as in many Teutonic countries of historical times, the ghost is given the seat of honour at the funeral banquet. We must also class as essentially propitiatory the meals given to the dead man at his tomb and sometimes partaken of by his relations, a custom censured by Saint Ambrose, but indulged in, long after his time, in many countries of Europe, especially among the Slavs.[30]

A well-known custom intimately connected with these practices is that of the coin given to the dead, usually put in their mouth.[31] It was once common in the ancient Mediterranean world, but in the Middle Ages and in modern times has been found in regions never reached by the Roman legions. We must candidly confess that we do not know the road of migration of this custom, though it is virtually certain that it must have followed in the wake of the coinage itself, i.e. starting from the Mediterranean countries and going in all directions with the coined money. The ancient explanation, that the coins were collected by Charon to pay for the ferry is, of course, nothing but an aetiological myth, delightfully ridiculed by Lucian. I take it that the coin is merely the last remnant of the dead man's property which was once upon a time given him or destroyed after his death. The Chinese, less commercialized than the Europeans but hardly less practical, prefer to burn the dead man's property in effigy, a highly economical procedure.

We know far less of the original meaning of the shoe given to the dead man (Totenschuh). The current tale about the rough roads of the Otherworld, somewhat like those of certain Mid-Western States, if we are to believe the good curate of Cucugnan who travelled them himself, give one an impression that they are essentially aetiological in character. Nor does the fact that the shoe is a common symbol of fertility [32] help very much in clearing up this puzzle.

A number of observances, still in vogue, are designed to prevent the ghost from returning to the place of his former abode. Thus it is imperative that the corpse be carried out of the house in a certain way, that the exit of the soul be facilitated by various methods, that the dead man's guilt be taken upon some one else, as happens in the case of the ' sin-eater ',[33] etc. It is neither advisable nor necessary to attempt an enumeration, the less so because there is no dearth of printed collections. But it is of importance, from the methodological point of view, to note that though such customs are apt to fall into oblivion in cases of ordinary death, they will linger in ' extraordinary ' cases. Among these must be reckoned suicides and murders as well as death of women in childbed, all of which are regarded as particularly ominous. Thus the custom of carrying a corpse out of the house through a special opening lest, if carried out through the door, the ghost may find his way back, is not now practised, in Europe, in cases of normal death, but it has survived to this day, in the midst of civilization, in the case of suicides.

Very curious is the treatment meted out, here and there, to a person believed dead and turning up unexpectedly. Such people, *ὑστεροπότμοι*, as they were called in Ancient Greece,[34] are thought ceremonially unclean and in a number of instances have to undergo a special rite, simulating a rebirth, before they are readmitted among the living.

A very similar rite, both in content and meaning, is connected with the practice of adoption.[35] Like the previous one, it is based upon the simulation of a new birth. The adopted person is either drawn through the gown of his adopted mother or pretends to taste of her milk.

Among the ' Threshold Rites ' must be reckoned the various coronation ceremonies which still flourish in countries with tradition as a living force, such as Great Britain and Japan. Like the rites of puberty and especially like the human wedding, the coronation of royalty is an initiation. Their essential kinship is in fact so strong that in a number of cases marriage itself has adopted some of the features of coronation, witness the bridal wreath in its relation to the crown.

A typical ' rite of the way ' is the ceremony of circumcision, found, as is well known, not only among the Jews and the ancient Egyptians, but among many savage and barbaric nations to this day. Since it is usually performed at the beginning of puberty, it is clear that it was meant to ' divide ' the ' men ' of the clan from the ' youths '. That such was its function also among the prehistoric Israelites and the Semites in general is proved not only by the modern Islamic custom but by a very significant passage in *Exodus* (iv. 24–6).

The special rites of aversion and avoidance which form the third category are by their very nature more rare and, as a general rule, also more impressive, at least to the outsider. They are called for by special events, usually misfortunes, which strike the community and which make special measures necessary. The foremost of these calamities is an epidemic among men or cattle. A common ceremony in former times, and one still alive in Eastern Europe, is that of drawing a ploughshare around the village.[36] Since at night all evil powers are more potent, the ploughing must usually be done by night. An additional feature is that the plough must be drawn by women in a state of nudity. Parallels for the sacred character of nakedness, that is, for its power over evil influences, are found all over the earth.

The same purpose, driving away an epidemic, is served by the ceremony of the need-fire,[37] known from one end of Europe to the other and in Asia and Africa as well. A special fire is kindled by an obsolete method, and the cattle are driven through it, whilst all the other fires in the village are extinguished. They are rekindled from the need-fire. The ancient legend of the Lemnian women has recently been shown to be derived from just such a ceremony,[38] and the mediaeval story of Vergil the magician who lets all the fires go out and compels the citizens to rekindle them from one definite spot, has no doubt a similar basis.[39]

The rite of digging up a corpse regarded as a vampire and of burning it is at bottom but another ceremony designed to put a stop to a raging epidemic, which is explained by the savage theory of vampirism. The rite has flourished until recent times in Modern Greece and on the islands of the Aegean. Crude in the extreme as it is, it was preceded by a still cruder one, to wit, the mutilation of the dead, to prevent their wreaking vengeance on the living.[40]

A rite of aversion is the sacrifice of a human being who is to act as a messenger to the other-worldly powers. The message is given him before his death and often, for the sake of safety, repeated by whispering it into the ear of the corpse. This strange rite is no doubt at the bottom of the Norse legend relating how Othin whispered into the ear of the dead Balder a message which no one else ever knew.[41]

Of a more personal nature, that is, resorted to for the purpose of curing an individual disease, is the practice of incubation, already mentioned in connexion with the dream oracle. The custom was widespread in antiquity, its centre being, in Hellenic times, the sanctuary of Asklepios at Epidauros. When paganism disappeared, in theory at least, the Christian saints charitably took upon themselves the duties formerly attended to by gods and heroes. Thus the shrine of the saviour twins, the Dioscuri, at Constantinople, was converted into a shrine of the saints Kosmas and Damian, both being as renowned physicians and healers as the sons of Leda, and the practice of incubation flourished in the Christian church as it had in the pagan temple. Nor is this example an isolated case.

It is curious to note in this connexion how the practice of incubation helped to develop a Christian legend, famous throughout the Middle Ages. In *Matt.* xxvii. 19 the wife of Pilate is mentioned as interfering with her husband on behalf of Jesus, the ‘ just man ’, for whose sake she declares she has suffered a great deal in the preceding night. The author of the gospel passage evidently had in view a series of ominous or warning dreams, the stock-in-trade of the classical tragedy. In the early Middle Ages, if not earlier still, the word ‘ to suffer ’ was interpreted so as to allow the inference that Pilate's wife had been ill and, adding thereto the well-known practice of incubation, that Jesus, another twin, had cured her by appearing to her in her dream, just as Asklepios and the twins, pagan or Christian, were supposed to appear to the patient in a dream, either curing him outright or indicating to him a remedy for his ailment.

Dearth, that is, failure of crops, is quite as dangerous as epidemics for primitive communities. Accordingly, rain charms[42] abound all over the earth, wherever agriculture plays a certain rôle in economic life, however modest. Other rites are of a purely preventive character, as for example the wassailing of fruit-trees already referred to, or the various harvest ceremonies, most of which are carried on with an eye on the next harvest.

A peculiar awe attaches to the first thing undertaken or the first thing received, and special precautions are necessary to avert possible evil consequences. This notion accounts for the special veneration accorded to the first fruit of any staple, which, by an afterthought, is as a rule dedicated to the gods, though the fear no doubt existed long before man thought of anything resembling gods. Again, there is the special treatment given to the first-born, either of animals or human beings, a notion which in some cases leads to the sacrifice of the eldest-born, a barbarous custom of which clear traces survive in the present-day text of the Old Testament, in spite of all priestly efforts of a civilized age to obliterate those very traces.[43] The same notion is at the basis of the dislike shown by superstitious people of entering first a new house or of having a deceased relation buried first in a new cemetery. The ancient libation grew out of the same type of beliefs.

If the position of the first is dangerous, that of the last is often no more enviable. 'Devil take the hindmost' is still a current saying, and it is reasonably certain that in a number of ceremonies the hindmost had to fall as a sacrifice. The custom survives in the Icelandic legend of the Devil's School, where the last of the disciples was to belong to the Evil One, who as so often is outwitted by the clever Saemundr.

Entering now upon the means employed in such rites, we have seen before that fire in particular is considered as most effective. Hence the rites of the Need and St. John's fires. Water is hardly less common in lustration rites: it was known in classical antiquity as the best means to clean a murderer from his guilt, or better, from the miasma which was thought to be attached to him. The witty Frenchman could then well exclaim :

C'est une drôle de maxime
Qu'une lessive efface un crime.

In the latter case a very good means was the passing through the yoke, well known from the annals of Roman history. By undergoing this rite, the soldiers were believed to slough off the miasma of manslaughter. Much the same set of notions lurks behind the ancient treatment of trophies believed to be highly dangerous and hence placed in special sanctuaries.[44]

The ritual ablutions common among many religious systems have grown out of the ritual lustration or purification. As a curious survival from paganism in the capital of ecclesiastical Germany, in Cologne, it was witnessed and duly noted by Petrarch.

Of special apotropaeic power is human spittle, hence the widespread custom of spitting to avert an evil omen or the effects of a curse or of the evil eye.

Noise and evil smells are no less effective in driving away evil spirits and breaking charms. The bells of the Jewish high priest no less than the church bells of more modern times have precisely such an object, and the custom of ringing the church bells to dispel hail storms has not died out yet in certain parts of Europe.

Lastly, special attitudes during prayer, known all over the known world, should be mentioned in this connexion, attitudes and gestures such as the continental habit of folding one's hands, the Jewish custom of covering the head, the Mohammedan and Hindoo postures, the Irish druidical habit of closing one eye while the charm or curse was being pronounced, etc. Underneath them all there is a special trend of thought, the hope of making the prayer or curse the more effective by a given attitude of the body. The same applies to the multitude of taboos with which certain priesthoods are hedged around, as was the Roman *flamen dialis*, except that in such cases the benefits supposed to accrue from such observances are of a public rather than of a private nature and all the more strictly enforced. What is true of the priesthood is no less true of the kingship, at least so long as that venerable institution preserved its sacrosanct character, and the many curious taboos and observances have filled two of the most interesting and instructive volumes of Sir J. G. Frazer.

Among the special attitudes observed during prayer there are a few, still in vogue even among Protestants, which may well have yet another origin, namely, the fear of seeing the deity who is invoked. According to a widespread belief, which has left its trace even in the Old Testament, the sight of a god or a goddess means death or at least blindness, human nature not being able to support such an apparition. One of the most elementary modes of protection was of course veiling[45] or, in default of a proper piece of vestment, covering one's eyes with one's hands. Quite apart from this general belief, certain divinities or their statues were supposed to be endowed with a particularly sinister glance; witness certain images of Athena and Dionysos. To avert their evil influences, their worshippers took care to veil them or else, when they were carried in procession, to avert their eyes. The widespread custom of veiling on special occasions, for example at a wedding, is but another rite of aversion, to keep off the 'evil eye' and the influence of nefarious daemons.

A very important question, and one which we are as yet far from being able to answer satisfactorily, is that of the diffusion of customs and rites. Are we to suppose that they have originated independently or must we rather think them to have spread from one centre? Off-hand one would unhesitatingly admit both possibilities, and differences of opinion would naturally set in when we came to decide the matter for individual cases. A good deal naturally depends upon the nature of the custom or rite. It goes without saying, for example, that an agricultural rite for which no antecedents can be discovered, cannot be separated from the history of agriculture. This means that all purely agricultural rites which cannot be interpreted as modifications of older ceremonies already in vogue in the fishing and hunting stage must have reached a given district at the same time as the methods of agriculture put in their appearance. This view is confirmed by the simple consideration that primitive agriculture did not present itself to the human mind as a series of (in our sense) rational procedures but rather as a sequence of magic ceremonies each of which was supposed to produce a certain effect. These ceremonies were therefore taught or adopted with agriculture itself. Whether a similar diffusion obtains for all the rest of the customs and rites must needs remain a matter of doubt. What is certain is that all higher religious systems have engaged in borrowings on a large scale from one another and from the more primitive creeds, and the sum total of the Christian ritual has either Jewish or pagan antecedents. One is at liberty to suppose similar borrowings in far earlier times; but definite proof can be furnished only by the cartographical method, when the areas of each custom or rite will be definitely known. It is to be hoped that the usefulness of such an enterprise will be realized, before it is too late, by Geographical and Ethnographical Societies, and a task be begun which cannot but furnish the most far-reaching results.

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[44] Salomon Reinach, *Cultes, Mythes et Religions*, III, 223 sqq.

[45] On veiling, cf. E. Westermarck, *Marriage Ceremonies in Morocco*, London, 1914, Index, s.v. *Veil*; my *Balor*, pp. 23 sqq.; J. Hoops, *E. St.*, LIV, 19–23.

CHAPTER XVI

MAGIC

THE basis of all science, the historical sciences no less than the natural ones, is logic, i.e. that faculty of the human mind which co-ordinates the phenomena of the outside world according to the rules of cause and effect. Hence it is that science ends where logic ends, and whatever is not amenable to the rules of logic falls outside the domain of science. Magic, too, is based upon logic, and in this respect at least it may well be regarded as something akin to science. Yet the logic upon which it rests is a faulty logic in that it finds causal relationships which upon more accurate observation are found to be non-existent. Magic is then a precursor of science in the sense that the logic on which it is built is a precursor of the logic which is at the base of all scientific work. Yet this does not mean that science is always and necessarily the successor of magic. On the contrary, both may exist side by side, not only in the same society (which would not be particularly miraculous) but even in the same mind, according as to whether it adopts a logic of rigorous fact or a logic of *assumed possibilities*, possibilities, that is, which cannot be proved but which can no more be disproved.

All magic may be divided into two categories according to the logic on which it rests. The first has been called sympathetic magic. Its logic assumes the continuance of a relationship that has in fact ceased. If, for example, the East African shepherds as well as the ancient Israelites refused to boil milk from fear that it might hurt the cow, no one can accuse them of a want of logic. Theirs is merely a faulty logic, i.e. they assume that because the milk was once part and parcel of the cow it still is so and that therefore any hurt done to the milk (such as heating it) would likewise hurt the cow.[1] Or, if a savage is careful to bury the clippings of his hair or the parings of his nails lest a witch get hold of them and through them work magic on him, he assumes that because hair and nails formed once a part of his body they still do so, and any action exercised upon them would react upon his body. The second category has been called homoeopathic magic; its logic may be rendered by the Latin proverb *similia similibus*. If, for example, rain is desired, water is poured out, on the theory that such an action will produce a similar one. All magic actions may be reduced to one or other of these two principles.

When we pass from these theoretical considerations to the practical application of magic we shall be astounded by the wide diffusion of magic rites in all walks of life. Nor can there be any question of exhausting this immense domain. We must necessarily content ourselves with surveying the field and giving practical examples from among the living folk-lore of our day and a few references in the classics.[2]

Mention has already been made of the various rain-charms, all based upon homoeopathic magic. The simulation of a lightning storm as told of the ancient king Salmoneus is essentially of the same character.[3] If peasant girls leap and dance when the flax is sown, the underlying idea is their wish that the flax should grow as high as they leap. If a man and a woman have sexual intercourse in the furrows of a newly ploughed field, it is hoped that the act in question will have the most beneficent effects upon the fertility of the field.[4] The torch race, essentially an agricultural ceremony, is to have quickening effects upon the crops, from the quickening power of fire and the speed of the runners. To the last sheaf of corn, just because it is the last, are ascribed special powers; hence the necessity of preserving it for the seed-corn of the coming year, supposed to be fertilized by the contact.[5]

From the rites of the field to those of the peasant's homestead is not a far cry. His illnesses and those of his family and his cattle are cured by remedies designated as such not by medical science but by the logic of homoeopathic magic.[6] If the remedy happens to have a real medical virtue, the utility of superstition is obvious; yet even when such is not the case, faith will achieve, if not miracles, at least a certain amount which it would be unwise to under-estimate in an age when more and more proof is forthcoming on the nature of psychic powers. Yet the same type of association will come out no less clearly in the various charms. These begin invariably with the statement that So-and-So (usually a god or a saint) did so-and-so, and just so the disease will be cured. This curious association of ideas has left a trace in numerous mediaeval invocations of the Christian deity. If Jehovah's great feats (as recorded in the Old Testament) are enumerated in relative clauses, this is done chiefly in order to give him a gentle reminder to do the like on the present occasion.[7]

Nor are diseases the only calamities where magic proves useful. A raging fire may be arrested by magic means, usually the rite of a circumambulation accompanied, of course, by the murmuring or singing of charms. Numerous are the legends relating such attempts, often ending fatally for the bold charmer, since the flames, angry at being foiled (fire in primitive thought is considered an animate being), rush after him to destroy him, and his horse must be quick indeed to allow him to escape their wrath.[8] Other charms are designed to rid a neighbourhood of noxious vermin, and the reader will easily recall the German legend of the Pied Piper of Hamelin.[9] Nor is this all. Thieves may be caught by purely magic processes, witches may be discovered and foiled. On the other hand, harm may be dealt out to an enemy, and it is curious to note the close relationship between the ritual of a relatively high religion (such as Christianity) and the magic ritual of witch or wizard. As a matter of fact, certain sacraments such as communion and baptism, essentially magic in origin, are still regarded as such by many folk, and all the efforts of the Church to fill the old magical bottles with the new wine of an ethical doctrine and a higher conception of the deity have so far proved of little avail. In fact, it may be openly questioned whether, had Christianity deliberately suppressed this magical element (which it had in common with the other mystery religions of the Near East), it would have succeeded at all in winning over the masses of the dying Empire. Apart from such problems, Christian sacraments like the Mass are frequently distorted for magical and generally nefarious purposes, as are Christian prayers occasionally. I refer, for example, to the so-called Devil's Mass, recited, upon request, by unscrupulous clergymen of the Roman faith for the purpose of bringing about the discomfiture or death of one with whom the person ordering and paying for the 'Mass' is not on the friendliest terms. It goes without saying that the higher clergy and the authorities generally have always frowned upon such practices, which none the less are said to be flourishing still in parts of Southern Europe. Much the same in principle is the procedure by which magical effects are desired to come about by a recitation backwards of the Lord's prayer, a practice no less common in Protestant than in Catholic countries. The underlying idea that religious formulas, by being turned backward as it were, may have a nefarious effect, is sufficiently old. For example, the Roman form of marriage called *confarreatio*, the old Patrician form and itself not at all free from magical aspects, could not be dissolved by what we now call a divorce according to the civil law, but could be 'unspelled' by a ceremony called the *diffarreatio* ; but the procedure was generally considered as of ill omen to the couple resorting to it.

The curious mixture of religion and magic opens up the problem of the mediaeval belief in witchcraft.[10] When in the first part of the last century Jacob Grimm distinguished two currents which made up this particular domain of human madness, the heritage of paganism of the Teutonic type and Christian, i.e., in the last analysis, Oriental and Mediterranean, lore, he was perfectly right, and his analysis still stands as essentially sound. What must be borne in mind only is (1) that not all the cases of witchcraft recorded in Scandinavian sources are genuinely Teutonic ; that on the contrary, we must reckon with a considerable influx of Celtic and Oriental (post-Christian) elements, and (2) that Grimm and many of his immediate successors had but a very imperfect knowledge of the various gnostic sects which continued to flourish, in spite of all persecutions, below the surface of mediaeval society. The belief in the nefarious powers of witches and wizards is of course considerably older and no doubt goes back into Indo-European times ; witness the glowing hymn of hate in *Rigveda* VII, 104 and *Atharvaveda*, VIII, 4, invoking the gods Indra and Soma to bring about their destruction. In the following paragraphs I shall survey, very summarily, it is true, the most important and most interesting powers attributed to witches, old and new.

Among the most common is the ability to fly, a power shared by witches with the Olympian gods, the Christian angels, and various classes of the Hindoo lower demonology. Accordingly, the ordinary accusation brought against the mediaeval witches was that of having flown to the witches' sabbath, and when an English judge with a sense of humour remarked to an old woman who confessed her fault that there was no law against flying, that joke meant that the eighteenth century was near, though even so late as that 'enlightened' leaders like John Wesley solemnly proclaimed that giving up the belief in witchcraft meant giving up the Bible.

Intimately connected with this power is the ability to give life to inanimate objects, to make them serve a useful or harmful purpose. The story of the magician's apprentice, known from Lucian's *Philopseudes*, will come to mind at once. The mediaeval witches, riding on broomsticks or pitchforks, were equally proficient. In Northern Europe, among the Scandinavian people, the mediaeval sources mention the peculiar institution of the 'sending', as it is called.[11] A witch will mark an inanimate object, a log or a bone, with runes and murmur certain charms. When thrown on the water the 'sending' will then on its own accord drift wherever it has been sent, even against the current, and bring harm to the party for whom it is destined. The *locus classicus* for this curious sort of witchcraft is the Icelandic *Grettis Saga*. The Scandinavians carried this practice to Greenland, where it is still known among certain Eskimo tribes, a good example of how elements of folk-lore migrate from people to people.

The Norse expression for magic and witchcraft was *seiðr*, a magician was a *seiðr-man* or wizard, and it is reported of the Norwegian king Harold Fairhair that he destroyed a large number of such magicians, though to be sure he was *not* a Christian, a warning that it is poor science to put the blame of witchcraft processes entirely on the churches and to condemn a stupid public opinion for nothing. The Norse *seiðr*-man and the *seiðkona* could make persons invisible by metamorphosis, and the old sagas are not lacking in stories of this type.[12] The magic mist, however, known by the more modern sagas, is not Norse or even Teutonic, but an importation of the druidical mist so common in the Irish sagas.

Even the magic music was not unknown in Scandinavia, and a few late sagas report how a wizard by his music made all animate and inanimate objects dance in the hall.[13] But it must be admitted that this is an instance not so much of practical faith as of fiction, the motive in question being wellnigh ubiquitous.

The same difficulty, that of deciding whether a given motive is based upon fact or merely on fiction, exists for the Celtic material. We have of course no reason whatever to doubt the existence of magic practices in the Celtic countries; yet the source material is untrustworthy and needs careful sifting. The Irish sagas, essentially forms of fiction, have to be analysed and their facts checked up at every moment. What the historical sources report about the magical feats of the druids in their contest with Saint Patrick is too obviously modelled on the contest of Moses with the Egyptian magicians not to arouse the gravest suspicions. Considerably better material could be garnered to this day from Irish witches themselves, of whom there still exist a certain number in the western counties.

A vast number of banalities such as recur in practically every witchcraft process, e.g. the milking, by magic, of other people's cows, or the stealing, by magic, of their butter, their cream, their wheat, the casting of the 'evil eye' upon children and cattle, the making of mice, rats, or other vermin, the production of hail-storms, etc., are of the widest diffusion and unquestionably pre-Christian, as they are bound up with no particular creed that may officially hold sway in a given country. The last witch burned in Hamburg, toward the end of the eighteenth century, was a servant girl who had bewitched the young master of the family so that he fell in love with her ; but it is well known that this type of magic has not died out to this day and, let us hope, will not in the near future, especially as the penalty threatened by the law has, as in so many other cases, been considerably relaxed.

Divination may be, and often is, based upon magic, a fact which has undoubtedly strengthened the opposition of the church to that pseudo-science. As a matter of fact, from the times of the witch of Endor and the Thessalian witch of Lucan the distinction between a witch and a fortune-teller is of the most delicate. For example, it is difficult to say whether the Scandinavian woman who in the *Eiríks Saga rauða* foretells events to come [14] to the Greenland colony, should be classed as a *völva* or rather as a *seiðkona*. Probably she was both, for as the saga significantly adds, the events turned out as the woman had prophesied.

We must, further, regard as essentially magical certain spells and practices carried out for no particular harmful purpose, but which, often enough, turn against the imprudent person who engaged upon them. Among seafaring and fishing populations witches were (and probably still are) to be found who undertook to sell favourable wind in bags, very much after the manner of Aeolus when he wanted to help the wandering Odysseus. But, as in this classical instance, the gift sometimes turns out baneful to the mariner, usually because he disregards the rules which accompany the medicine. More gruesome still are certain stories, based undoubtedly on actual practice, though to be sure the dismal end was introduced to serve a moral purpose, where we hear of a girl who by spells brought her absent lover into her presence, or similarly conjured up her future husband. The tale ends with the statement that some time later the husband discovers that it was his wife who wrought the charm that caused him such unendurable suffering, and, as his remembrance comes back, he seizes a knife and stabs his fair partner, no doubt as a warning to others.

A piece of sympathetic magic of very wide diffusion is to be found in the so-called *envoûtement*. A witch secures a waxen image of the person to be harmed and then either stabs it or slowly melts it over a fire. As the image is thus destroyed, so the man whom it represents will likewise sicken and die. The mediaeval *Gesta Romanorum* [15] contains a famous story based upon this practice, here carried on by a disloyal wife and her lover. Yet it is by no means limited to fiction. The process brought against the Duchess of Gloucester, in the reign of Henry VI, which caused the downfall of her husband, bore on the same type of practices and the superstitions underlying them. Nay, the famous definition of high treason, now hopelessly antiquated yet still on the statute books, which speaks of 'imagining the king's death', has a peculiar flavour and forcibly recalls magic practices of this type.

Nor is an image or picture the only means to achieve such a nefarious end. Any part of the victim's body will suffice—as a rule, clippings of his hair or his nails; as Shakespeare puts it:

> Some devils ask but the parings of one's nail,
> A rush, a hair, a drop of blood, a pin,
> A nut, a cherry-stone.

Hence the care certain peoples take of their nail-parings and their hair-clippings. Often enough, the mere foot-trace suffices. I cannot do better than quote from the famous Russian ballad of Dobrýnya the Dragon-slayer and Marína.[16] The hero has scorned the advances of this Slavonic descendant of the ancient mother-goddess. Then

> up sprang Marinushka, seized her dagger and hacked Dobrýnya's footsteps, flung them into an oven painted with many devices, and conjured them with a powerful incantation: 'Burn, ye footsteps of Dobrýnya, burn in this oven of many hues, and may his spirit likewise burn within him for me. As I cut these footsteps, may Dobrýnya's dear little heart cut for me.' Then worse than a sharp knife cut Dobrýnya's heroic heart. That evening he ate nothing, at midnight he slumbered not, and waited only for the white dawn. . . .

Nor does the connecting link between wizard and victim have to be of a material and physical nature. The very picture of the latter may suffice; hence the well-known aversion of savages to having their picture taken.[17] Still more ethereal is the name, and the magic of the name is indeed numerous and important enough to fill a volume by itself.[18] In primitive thought the practical identity of the name and its bearer is tacitly assumed, whence flows the wellnigh universal desire of savages to keep their names secret, lest a magician work on them mischief through his knowledge of their names. Equally common is the belief that the pronouncing of the name attracts the bearer, hence the reluctance to utter the name of a person deceased. A god being by his very nature potentially in a position to work either good or harm, probably more harm than good, it became imperative not to call him without sufficient cause. More, by a knowledge of the god's name a wizard or enchanter might force the divinity to take a leading part in his own nefarious schemes to the detriment of others. Hence the common practice of keeping the name of the divinity a secret, a custom common among the ancient Egyptians, and hence the ' unutterable ' name of Jahveh. The Romans, from a similar motive, kept the name of the guardian deity of their city a profound secret, lest the enemies of the republic should entice and lure him away. The same taboo extends to the names of harmful and dangerous animals, as we have seen in a previous chapter, and also to the names of diseases and death, hence the French *le beau mal* or *le bon mal*, Italian *il male maestro, il male santo* for epilepsy ; hence the designation of *les malades* or *les chrétiens* for the lepers in the Middle Ages ; hence also the numerous circumlocutions for ' death ' and ' to die ', all consequences of notions centuries and perhaps millennia older than Mrs. Baker Eddy.

A curse, to be effective, must be attached to the name of the cursed, which means that the curser must at least know the name of the victim. Hence Sigurd's refusal to give his name to the dying Fafnir, hence also the belief in what the Germans call *Totnennung*. A hero is invulnerable, according to this notion, until his name is called out. The *locus classicus* for this belief is the Norse *Hamðismál*.[19] The underlying reason seems to be the following. It is well known that persons in a trance, such as the Norse Berserkers, are practically insensible to hurts, and cases are known of modern fakirs, gashing themselves with knives without losing a drop of blood. But it is a no less well attested fact that the minute such a person is called by his name he wakes up from his trance, and at the same time loses the superhuman powers in question. An imperfect knowledge of psychic states of this nature would no doubt lead to an exaggerated importance being given to the name.

It would be erroneous, however, to assume that the magic act alone suffices to bring about the desired result. On the contrary, most magic acts are accompanied by words, usually a magic song. The very etymology of the word group derived from Latin *incantare* testifies to this state of affairs, and it is significant that the Old Norse word *galdr*, pl. *galdrar*, meaning charm, is derived from the verb *gala*, ' to sing ', familiar to English readers from the word nightin*gale*.

The magic song may be replaced by a mere formula usually murmured with a low voice, or, in Scandinavia, by runes.[20] The latter are of course engraved where they are supposed to be most effective. Thus certain runes engraved on a sword will make the weapon unbreakable or give it victory. Runes engraved on objects and placed under the bed will produce illness or death. That place, as well as the threshold, is generally considered as most favourable for all sorts of charms, and the story *Sapientes* of the *Seven Sages of Rome* relates how Merlin discovers such a charm under the monarch's bed, placed there by the wicked councillors.[21] In the *Egils Saga Skallgrimssonar* the fatal runes are found under the patient's pillow. The Norse motive of the 'sleeping thorn', known from the legend of the disobedient Valkyrie, is no doubt likewise based upon a rune charm.

The workers of charms may be of either sex, and accordingly we find wizards no less than witches, though the latter almost everywhere by far outnumber the former. At the bottom of this peculiarity is no doubt the natural awe which surrounds woman in all savage societies, but also the greater power of intuition and instinct of the fair sex. The persecution of women as witches is by no means peculiar to the Christian Middle Ages. On the contrary, we have analogues in Roman and Celtic antiquity.[22] The Thessalian witches will also come to the reader's mind, as will the memorable passage where Tacitus speaks of the high regard in which woman was held in ancient Teutonic society. That regard had of course nothing to do with ideas of chivalry but was simply an outgrowth of the primitive awe of the supernatural powers of woman. Nor is there any basis for the assumption that witches were necessarily *old* women. Even a superficial perusal of the Mediaeval witchcraft processes will soon convince any one of the contrary. The last witch burned in Hamburg was a young servant girl, and Joan of Arc is perhaps a still better example. The Norse *seiðkona* of the *Eiríks Saga rauða* was certainly no old hag, and the Christian woman who is finally prevailed upon to sing the old magic songs does not appear to be particularly old either.

Wherever magic was practised, and that means of course all over the earth, the motive of the fight between two magicians or two groups of magicians became a favourite one.[23] Accordingly, we find in the *Arabian Nights* the tale of the struggle of two witches, a 'white' one and a 'black' one, the former disenchanting the man who had been converted into an animal by the latter. We have further the widespread tale of the magician's apprentice who finally outwits his master and brings about his death. In Scandinavia, finally, we hear how the Danish king Harald Gormsson sends a magician to Iceland to spy out the conditions of the island, how this magician assumes the shape of a whale and how he is foiled by four Icelandic magicians, who by their charms make his landing impossible.

The magician more often than not had to prepare himself for his particular task, sometimes by fasting, sometimes by observing a special diet. Thus the *spákona* of the *Eiríks Saga* is given the hearts of various animals, the underlying idea being, that by eating the heart of an animal the real or supposed qualities of the animal would pass to the eater. The various injunctions respecting sexual continence or the abstinence from alcoholic liquors, imposed upon certain priesthoods, have of course a magic root; and it is to be suspected that the Italian mobs of the eleventh century who so powerfully aided Gregory VII in carrying out his reforms in the matter of the celibacy of the priests were actuated far less by the utilitarian and political principles largely responsible for this measure than by a curious revival of beliefs in the magic power of virginity.

The connexion of priesthood and magic is evident almost everywhere; it survives in the powers attributed to Roman priests to this day, even among Protestant populations. If in modern societies the priest may at best be regarded as a man whose intercession with the deity is of an especial weight, in more primitive social groups he appears rather as a man who by certain words and acts best known to himself may force the deity to do his will. Nor is there any need to descend to fairly barbaric societies to meet with such conceptions. Even among the post-exilic Jews there were rabbis who were said to force Jahveh or who attempted to do so. After all, the dividing line between prayer and charm is sometimes a very slender one, and one need not be a determinist to make out a good case for a theory that the prayer is but a higher evolutionary stage of the magic charm. The relationship is particularly close between the magic and the religious sacrifice, so much so, in fact, that we may reasonably assume that the latter is but a modification of the former. At all events, it would be a grave methodological error to regard the sacrifice which is still obligatory for certain magical actions, a black cat or a black rooster given to the Devil, particularly common in treasure legends, as a degenerate form of the pre-Christian sacrifice of the natural religions. The error would be of the same type as the very common assumption that the various European *patois* are degenerate forms of the literary language. To my mind such considerations would dispose once for all of the assumption that the *do ut des* idea must be thought of as at the basis of sacrifice, and Robertson Smith [24] was right at least in his discovery of the magic root of all sacrifice, though one may of course justly doubt his theories touching the importance of the totemic idea.

The magician and witch, such as they still live in fairy tale and legend, are unthinkable without their magic staffs.[25] From the Homeric Kirke and the Moses of *Exodus* to the Norse *spákona* and the witch in *Hänsel und Gretel* the magic staff is the one necessary implement of all adepts of witchcraft, and if the Hellenic Hermes is provided with a staff, there is no doubt a similar idea at the bottom. But what exactly was this idea ? In the almost complete absence of discussions I venture to propose a connexion between the magic staff and the divining rod. That is, certain psychic properties of human individuals, though altogether independent of the rod or the staff, will show themselves to greater advantage if the right hand is at the same time equipped with such an implement. This fact led to the erroneous idea that the rod or staff itself had the powers which were really inherent in the wizard or witch, as for example the ability to discover hidden water. By an extension of thought the magic staff, the *baguette*, ended up by becoming the chief tool of wizard, witch, and priest-king. The sceptre or sway, at all events, cannot for a moment be regarded as a substitute for a sword or other weapon ; it is purely and simply the magic staff of the priest-king.

There is no need in this book to rehearse the brilliant and altogether probable theory of the magic origins of the kingship. That task has been accomplished by the greatest of modern folklorists, a scholar whose breadth of vision and critical acumen are matched only by the admirable and almost unsurpassable skill with which he wields that flexible and yet so difficult tool, our common mother-tongue, and by his all-embracing human sympathy and kindly generosity. His work, though rooted in the tradition of the Anthropological School, is yet so universal that it may properly be said to belong to no school in particular, and by comparison with its great scope and philosophical depth all criticism of detail, even where justified, must of necessity appear small and trifling. Yet it may be well to point out in passing that the profession of king, which has latterly somewhat fallen in the general public esteem, at least on the European continent, is by no means the only one whose roots must be sought in magic and about which there has always hung a ghostly atmosphere. Another such profession is that of the blacksmith, whose craft still is, in Africa for example, feared as something uncanny and savouring of magic. In Europe we have altogether a considerable body of tradition pointing in the same direction ; the names of

Hephaistos and Wayland as well as that of the Celtic Goibniu will readily come to mind. The common awe of molten metal, mysterious to the primitive, was no doubt strengthened by the fact that the smith's calling seems practically never to have been exercised by a member of the clan but always by outsiders, wandering tradesmen of foreign speech and habits, keeping strictly for themselves the secrets of their profession.[26] Down to the time of the Renaissance blacksmiths would practise medicine, and the Italian story-teller Franco Sacchetti relates a wholly authentic anecdote showing a smith in the rôle of a dentist. At an even later period smiths were found cauterizing wounds, and it is to be suspected that if the smith of Gretna Green usurped certain spiritual functions, his procedure was in fact far less revolutionary than might at first sight appear to have been the case.

If the blacksmith's craft, essentially a man's craft, has always had a magic flavour, it yet finds a pretty close parallel among the professions mainly, if not exclusively, exercised by women. I refer to the activity of spinning and weaving. Numerous are the phrases, in all European languages, which are reminiscent of the magic of weaving. Suffice it to recall the etymology of Anglo-Saxon *wyrd*, Old High German *Wurt*, meaning ' fate ', ' death ', connected with Dutch *wortelen* (indicating the movement of the spindle) and derived from the same Indo-European root as Latin *vertere*. The Greek Moirai no less than the Norse Norns were thought to spin the fates of men, and the Anglo-Saxon *freoðuwebbe* and the Dutch *oorlog* point in much the same direction.[27]

Essentially magic is the curious notion that a wound can only or best be healed by the person who struck it, a notion at the base of the ancient Greek story of Telephos and Achilles and the Mediaeval legend of Tristan who goes to the country of the Morholt to be cured of the wound which the latter had struck him. To this is related the even more curious belief that a second blow will do away with the effects of the first, hence the command, found in many stories both Oriental and Occidental, to strike but one blow, since at the second stroke the ogre or other monster would gain new strength and inevitably slay the hero.[28] Translated into more prosaic language, the notion recommends cutting off a tuft of hair from a mad dog that bit a person and applying it to the wound.[29]

Magic, i.e. the false logic repudiated by modern man in the light of modern experience, has unquestionably played, in man's past, the rôle we like to attribute to the true logic, based upon observation and inference, of modern science, in modern life. In this respect at least magic may be considered as the precursor of the natural sciences. Yet it is well to bear in mind one important limitation holding good for the true logic no less than for the false one, and that is, that at no time has man been swayed exclusively or even preponderantly by logical considerations, true or false. Sentiment has always had the upper hand, or else it would be inconceivable that, as Sir James G. Frazer himself admits, human history should have been little more than a long series of crime and folly. In view of that experience I am inclined to attribute to the precursor of modern logic on the whole as modest a place as that now held by logic, mayhap even a more modest one. It cannot be the object of the present book to point out how often magic has been the vehicle of ambitious men and their schemes toward self-aggrandisement. The harm done would at all events be negligible when compared with the infinitely greater harm wrought at all times by unreasoning fanaticism, a fanaticism swayed by no logic, true or false. And even the instances where, as intimated above, magic did serve the ulterior purposes of ambitious men, can be matched by as many instances showing how the successor of magic, modern science, has been misused in no other manner and with no less nefarious results. In fact, there is certainly reason to voice the apprehension that human nature has not changed enough, in the course of the centuries, to preclude a danger of modern science becoming, in this respect, a worse tyrant than magic and religion put together. They all need, as a balance, as it were, ordinary sound common sense, the common sense of a Voltaire and an Andrew Lang, which recent events have shown to be a virtue even more rare than learning.

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[2] Cf. also the excellent little booklet of the late Ernst Samter, *Volkskunde im altsprachlichen Unterricht*, Berlin, 1923.

[3] Frazer, *Magic Art*, I, 310.

[4] *R.H.*, LVI, 265 sqq.

[5] Sir J. G. Frazer, *Spirits of the Corn and the Wild*, London, 1914.

[6] This opens up the vast domain of Folk-Medicine, which I cannot here discuss more at length, at least beyond what has been said on the subject

in connexion with plant lore. The reader will find useful indications in the following works: Fanny Bergen, *Animal and Plant Lore*, Boston, 1899, pp. 68 sqq.; E. Stemplinger, *Antike und moderne Volksmedizin*, Leipzig, 1925 (*Das Erbe der Alten*, Heft 10); W. C. Black, *Folk-Medicines*, London, 1883.

[7] Cf. F. Heiler, *Das Gebet*,^{5} München, 1923.

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[9] F. Meissel, *Die Sage vom Rattenfänger von Hameln*^{4}, Hameln, 1924.

[10] Cf. Walter Scott, *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*, London, 1830. J. Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*, II^4, 868 sqq.; III^4, 303 sqq.

[11] G. E. J. Powell and E. Magnússon, *Icelandic Legends*, London, 1864–6, II, lxxiv sqq.; xcix; K. Maurer, *Isländische Volksmärchen der Gegenwart*, Leipzig, 1860, pp. 76 sqq., 95, 99, 111, 135, 140; *S.S.N.*, IX, 186; Paul Sock, *Eskimomärchen*, Berlin, s.d., p. 79.

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[13] Cf. S. Bugge, *Harpens Kraft*, *A.N.F.*, VII (1891), pp. 97 sqq.; further: *C.J.*, XXI, 21–8; *N.M.*, XXIX, 254 sq.

[14] Ed. G. Storm, p. 14 sq.; cf. Gering, *op. cit.*, p. 25, n. 16.

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[16] *Balor*, p. 47.

[17] R. Andree, *Ethnographische Parallelen und Vergleiche*, II (1889), pp. 18 sqq.

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[22] Salomon Reinach, *Cultes, Mythes et Religions*, III (1913), p. 258; *R.C.*, XLIV, 374–80.

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[27] K. R. V. Wikman, *Die Magie des Webens und des Webstuhls im schwedischen Volksglauben*, *Acta Acad. Aeboenis, Humaniora*, I, No. 6; *M.L.N.*, XLIII, 471 sqq.

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CHAPTER XVII

FOLK-DANCE AND FOLK-DRAMA

IT is a common but erroneous supposition that the popular dance as we understand it is essentially of erotic origin. As a matter of fact, the modern dance of human couples makes its appearance but late in the history of civilization. This fact itself would not of course disprove off-hand an erotic origin for the institution, and it is well to observe in this connexion that certain manifestations among higher animals, birds and mammals, might well be claimed as precursors of the dance. Yet though these are distinctly connected with sexualism, it is a noteworthy fact that as a rule the male alone performs the movements in question. The group-dance, by far the oldest attested, is not of erotic origin, or is certainly not chiefly so.

In tracing the dance back to the stages of savagery or barbarism, the inquirer inevitably meets with the statement, made by the performers, that ' dancing makes the spirits rejoice with the people ', or that ' when people dance all food grows well and failure to dance would have for a natural consequence a failure of crops, failure of game, failure of everything, in short, starvation and misery '. That is, the usefulness of the institution is inevitably dwelt upon. There is no valid reason to doubt the essential truth of such statements, though the reason behind it all is of course purely psychological. It is a well-known fact that to men, whether savage or civilized, things are what they appear to be. But there is nothing so helpful in bringing on an optimistic frame of mind as the natural intoxication of purely physical exuberance. Such a state of mind is produced by music, stimulants (such as Robert Burns's ' big-bellied bottle ') and more or less violent movements of the body. Often enough we have a combination of the three, and in so far as Optimism is decidedly the best of all philosophies so far invented, there is no reason to find fault with the means, however artificial, of helping it along. The late E. Rohde appears to have had the same idea when he prefaced the second part of his great work on Greek transcendentalism by a verse of the most profound of the Islamic mystics, Dschelal-eddin Rumi :

> He who knows the power of dance
> Lives in God,
> For he knows how Love may kill.

Leaving on one side, however, such speculations, we note in the first place that the savage, when stressing the utilitarian character of his performance, may quote certain facts in support of his view. In the first place, there can be no question but that quite a number of dances have a definitely magical aspect. If, for example, certain dances imitate the movements of certain animals which must be pronounced as ' desirable ' from the standpoint of the primitive hunter, the purpose implied is that thereby the said animals shall be attracted and fall an easy prey to the hunting community. Whether the ancient Greek bear-dance in honour of the bear-goddess *par excellence* (Artemis), had such an origin, it cannot now be said. Yet after reading how in certain Esquimaux villages the coming and killing of a polar bear is celebrated as a glorious and profitable event, I cannot help thinking that the bear-dance, in spite of the dangerous character of the animal thereby attracted, may have had such an origin.

It would be a mistaken notion to suppose that the magic of the dance was thought effective only in this particular stage of man's development. On the contrary, practices such as these will linger on down to the agricultural stage, and the magic formerly designed to attract desirable animals will now be turned to making the crops grow. The most obvious example is the ' leaping dance ' implied by the Latin word *saltare* and known in connexion with the ritual of the Arval fraternity. Yet when in modern Germany and Sweden the young people leap high at the sowing of the flax, the underlying idea is the same, that is, the flax will grow as high as they leap. Of magic import are the pyrrhic dances practised not only in Ancient Greece but among the Germans according to Tacitus, among the Mediaeval Swedes, as we know from Olaus Magnus, and surviving in many parts of Europe, including the British Isles, to this day. Related in type is the famous ' snake dance ' of the Pueblos in New Mexico, designed to make the crops grow.

Often the magic purpose of the dance is more ambitious still. The heavenly bodies in their ' dance ', it is thought, need a certain amount of encouragement not to slow down their movements. Dances or (in Ancient Greece and Ireland) chariot races are best calculated to impart the proper magic. Hence the occurrence of such dances and races on the critical days of the solar year. The torch-dance, like the torch-race, had probably an analogous origin, except that from an early time both were no doubt also fertility rites.

Sometimes such dances are merely designed to drive away evil powers, which explains the occurrence of sword dances at weddings and funerals, and when the Romans, in the fourth century before our era, hired Etruscan dancers to be rid of a plague, the underlying set of ideas was no doubt of much the same order. The funeral dance in particular, though as yet but imperfectly known, deserves of special attention. From the attacks on this institution by the Mediaeval Church, it is quite clear that the Teutonic peoples were once addicted to such practices; at least the *carmina diabolica* quoted by the ecclesiastical authorities, the well-attested dances at vigils and, last of all, the ominous legends of dancers in cemeteries cursed by some priest and condemned to dance to all eternity, point in that direction. To this indirect evidence must be added the observation of Saxo Grammaticus [1] put in the mouth of his hero, the old Starkaðr, on the dances and mimic rites going on at Upsala, the centre of the Swedish Frey cult, at regular intervals, reminding one of the periodicity of the Olympian games. In Western and Central Europe the funeral dance seems to have died out; it has survived to this day in the Celtic-speaking part of Ireland, where it is connected with the 'wake' and where it is accompanied by certain quaint melodies, recognized as funereal by the whole community, so much so that when an old farmer was finally prevailed upon by a folklorist to sing the song, he was careful to shut doors and windows first, not uselessly to alarm the village community.[2] The famous *Danse macabre*, the dance of the dead, of the later Middle Ages appears to have been a revival of some ancient custom, practically dead for centuries, designed to stay a plague, or else some funeral dance intended to prevent the deceased from wreaking his vengeance on the living. The war-dances practised by savage communities either before the marching out of the armies or else, by the women at home, while the battle is in progress, are of a purely magic character. No wonder that under such circumstances dancing should be considered, as among the Tarahumare Indians of Mexico, a very serious matter. As a preparation for war, it must also be admitted, it is not the worst of institutions; at least it does not drain a nation of strength and resources twenty years before the real war starts. It might therefore respectfully be suggested to European politicians as a decided improvement upon present-day methods.

If all these dances can be distinctly classed as magic ceremonies, exuberance alone will account for another set, connected with harvest and victory celebrations. Again races may take their place, and have done so in a number of countries.

The dividing line between magic and religion is, as is well known, difficult to draw. Though I am far from postulating that religion was everywhere the successor of magic (a theory far too simple to account for the complexity of all known phenomena), this much may be asserted, that in connexion with ritual dances the god more often than not was a late-comer. We may assume, for example, that the bear-dance of Artemis existed long before that goddess and that when she stepped in, finally, she merely took the place of an older bear-goddess. Yet it is equally certain that once some higher form of religion was definitely established the cult dance formed a decisive part of the rites. Thus we hear of dances in connexion with the *carrus navalis* of the Northern Isis, the goddess Nehalennia. Saxo Grammaticus relates how his hero Starkaðr returns from Sweden disgusted at the effeminate dances performed at Upsala every eight years. Here we have the clear indication of a cycle, no doubt of much the same origin as the cycle of certain Greek games. The wearing of animal masks, originally no doubt designed to attract the desirable animals by the logic of imitative magic, next served to assimilate the worshipper to a theriomorphic divinity. When the divinity had assumed human forms the ancient dance would linger as a curious survival no longer understood, a fitting subject for the inquiry of antiquarians.

This very train of thought is at the basis of the idea of the ' limping dance ' such as we hear was performed by the priests of Baal (some Semitic or proto-Semitic divinity) in the Old Testament story. The priests limped evidently because the god himself was supposed to limp, alike in this particular to the Greek, i.e. Asiatic, Hephaistos, and to the Christian Devil, who inherited this peculiarity (among many others) from the old pagan divinities. Why a divinity should be depicted as limping has baffled many inquirers. At the moment no satisfactory answer appears to be known which will hold for all cases. For if Hephaistos and Wayland are lame because they are smiths and because in rude and primitive ages men unfitted for war naturally went in for some useful craft such as the smith's, the class of divinities covered by this explanation is obviously a small minority. The crippled feet of dwarfs and elves are most probably the skeleton feet of the dead. Yet a truly definite answer can be given only when all the material has been collected from the entire surface of our globe.

The religious character of the dance made it appear logical to perform it in the sanctuary itself. Quite naturally, any religion which had purged itself of these more earthly elements that clung to it from its origin must have frowned upon the institution. Hence the fulminations of the Jewish prophets against practices of this type, carried on, none the less, probably down to the fall of the capital and the destruction of the First Temple. The Christian clergy of a later age took up the same attitude, which did not prevent many ritual dances from surviving in Christian churches, tradition being much too strong even for a clergy most zealous for ' reform '. An excellent example is the famous ritual dance at the cathedral of Seville, a survival from the days of Spanish paganism when the Phoenicians worshipped their Tyrian Hercules in this way. Yet even in Victorian England such curious survivals could be found. The dance mentioned by Thomas Hardy in the opening chapter of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* seems to belong to that class. In the case of dances around sacred trees and wells, around dolmens or the village church, the institution of course never entered the Church ; it remained outside Christianity, and the fact that here and there an image of Our Lady was attached to the tree or a cross put on the dolmen does not change this essential fact.

If the Church observed a hostile attitude toward dancing as such, an attitude which lasted throughout the Middle Ages and was taken over by not a few of the so-called evangelical sects in the New World, the chief reason lay in the pagan and cultic origin of the institution. What is said, in the ecclesiastical denunciations, about the famous dance of Salome as a consequence of which John the Baptist is fabled to have lost his head (certainly not the last man who lost it on such an occasion), merely serves to bolster up the chief argument, the essential paganism of the institution. Sometimes, it is true, obscene features are mentioned in addition, and here it must in justice be said that the accusation was probably not altogether unfounded, though what was obscene to clerics condemned to celibacy was probably far less so to the simple folk of the village community.

Obscene dances are particularly frequent in connexion with the cult of the gods and daemons of fertility. To this class belonged the dances performed at Upsala, the centre of the old Swedish Frey cult. On the other side of the globe we have the dances and ritual performances of the famous Aroi Society of the Society Islands, likewise designed to fulfil such a purpose. Lastly, the old Dutch *kermes* dances, performed as they were at the season of the general sowing, appear to have distinguished themselves by some such features, a circumstance which led to their suppression. At the bottom, of course, is the simple notion that an exhibition of the organs of fertility by men and women will stimulate the fertility of the seed and ensure a plentiful crop. That was false logic and consequently foolishness ; yet one may well ask with Erasmus whether those ' fools 'were not of a purer mind and happier withal than the ' wise 'men who finally stopped their practices, leaving in their place but the hypocrisy of modern Pharisaism and the threadbare dullness of modern life.

The afterthought so detrimental to the ancient dance was not in all cases the outcome of purely moral considerations. The awakening of self-consciousness, that mortal enemy of all art, would inevitably bring about the same result. Nor does one have to cull one's examples exclusively from modern times. The Old Testament itself gives one of the finest that could be selected and, what is better still, the sympathies of the ancient writer are plainly in favour of the old practice. I refer of course to the episode of David dancing before the ark of the covenant. The old freebooter and ex-robber-chief, though anointed king of Israel, saw no objection whatever to following the ancient custom and ' danced before the Lord with all his might '. He had not, however, reckoned with his wife, a king's daughter and brought up, no doubt, in good society. She could not help finding her husband's conduct highly unbecoming to a king, and told him so. There was no domestic scene, but the tale goes on to say significantly : ' Therefore Michal, the daughter of Saul, had no child unto the day of her death.'

It was perhaps under the influence of this Old Testament story that the Middle Ages found enough generosity to celebrate the dance of the ' juggler of Our Lady ', that touching tale of the poor wayfaring man, member of a class ostracized by the clergy, who had the idea of celebrating the Queen of Heaven in this most expressive language of all. As the Old French poem indicates, she understood him better than her clergy did.

The Old Testament, it is almost unnecessary to add, rarely took such a liberal stand. As a contrast to the scene of David dancing before the ark one might cite the equally well-known dance around the ' golden calf ', the historicity of which need not be questioned at all. On the contrary, the encircling dance implied is well attested by many parallels from many parts of our globe. The particular dance was abruptly ended, it will be remembered, by the return of the puritanically minded Moses, though in an allegorical sense it is still going on as merrily as ever :

Doppelflöten, Hörner, Geigen
Spielen auf zum Götzenreigen,
Und es tanzen Jakobs Töchter
Um das goldne Kalb herum—
Brum—brum—brum—
Paukenschläge und Gelächter.

It is but natural that with the mystery religions the dance should come to form a not unimportant part of the mystery rites. That is true of the ancient religion as it is of many cults still found among modern savages. What Lucian says, 'Most people say of those who reveal the mysteries that they dance them out', might be said by any Zulu chief answering a European inquirer.

The religious dance is apt to become ecstatic in nature, particularly in connexion with such mystery cults. The classical illustrations are of course furnished by the Dionysiac ritual. Yet we have also good reason to believe that certain Hebrew prophets worked themselves into ecstasy by the same method, as do the modern dancing dervishes in the Islamic countries. Once a state of such frenzy is attained, the participants become impervious as it were to wounds. Hence the spectacle of the Asiatic Galli, the priests of the Phrygian Kybele, hence also certain phenomena recorded in connexion with the Mediaeval *flagellantes*, representatives of a movement which to all appearances was a curious revival of ancient practices. Yet also in the Zuñi and Pueblo snake dances mentioned above, which were performed to attract rain, the snakes, though of the most vicious kind, are seen to do no particular harm to the frenzied dancers. This notwithstanding, a certain group of self-righteous 'uplifters', mostly of the spinster type, has been clamouring for years that the United States Government should suppress the rites in question, on the highly plausible ground that the poor Indians must be protected against their own recklessness.

As for its form, the popular dance is inseparably connected with popular music and the dance-song. In primitive societies the drum appears to be the favourite, perhaps because it is the only, instrument of dance music. In Europe, for example in Mediaeval France and in the Faroe Islands, the dance movements were accompanied by a clapping of hands, a peculiarity still visible in the old colonial Virginia Reel. The earliest reference in literature to this type of dance (but hardly quoted in this connexion) is the so-called *Song of St. Faro*, dating from the ninth century:

De Chlotario est canere rege Francorum
Qui ivit pugnare in gentem Saxonum:
Quam grave provenisset missis Saxonum,
Si non fuisset inclytus Faro de gente Burgundionum.

Quando veniunt missi Saxonum in terra Francorum,
Faro ubi erat princeps,
Instinctu Dei transeunt per urbem Meldorum ;
Ne interficiantur a rege Francorum.

It is a victory song and dance recorded by Hildegarius, author of a *Vita sancti Faronis*, written in 869. The song itself is said by the hagiographer to go back to Merovingian times. That statement is but ill-supported, as has been convincingly shown by M. Bédier.[3] As a matter of fact, it is quite certain that Hildegarius, wanting better documents, made it up himself, largely under the influence of an Old Testament passage. What he cannot very well have invented is the feature of the hand-clapping in accompaniment of the dance movements and the peculiar rhythm, which is that of the typical Mediaeval ballad. What he did was to write the text in the ballad metre he knew to be used for dances of this type by his own contemporaries. As a witness for the existence of the French epic in Merovingian or even in Carolingian times the *Song of St. Faro* cannot indeed be used. As tangible evidence for the existence of the popular dance-song it is a precious document. Nor are British examples wanting. The best known is, perhaps, the Scottish song of victory sung after the battle of Bannockburn :

Maydens of Englonde, sore may ye morne,
For your lemmans ye have loste at Bannockisborne.
  With a hewe a lowe.
What wenyth the Kynge of Englonde
So soon to have wonne Scotlonde :
  With a rumby lowe.

Like the dance, the popular drama is of religious origin and, all dramatic art being ultimately derived from the popular type, the statement is justified that the drama itself is an outgrowth of religion and cult. One important distinction must here be made. If the statement refers to the origins of Greek and Indian tragedy and comedy, it is literally true in that form. If on the other hand it refers to the drama of Mediaeval Europe, the important addition must be made that, though finally both cultic and popular, the mystery and miracle play as well as the morality owe their form and most of their contents to the book-lore of the Roman Church ; it was therefore cultic but semi-learned, growing more and more popular as the centuries rolled by. What the genuine popular drama was like, in the early Middle Ages, can only be vaguely surmised from the allusions of chroniclers and censors of public morals. The *ludi* referred to by Saxo Grammaticus, in connexion with the Frey cult of Upsala, no doubt, in view of the phallic nature of that cult, resembled in more points than one the archetype of the Attic comedy as it was cultivated by Aristophanes. The numerous survivals in modern harvest rites or in ritual ploughing give a certain idea of the character of such representations. In the light of such performances it is often possible to discover the ritual origin of many an ancient myth, both in Greece and Scandinavia.

For example, we have pointed out above that the ancient Greek myth of Oedipus who slays his father and marries his mother (the earth goddess) arose most probably out of a ritual drama, the struggle of the Old and the New Year for the possession of the fruitful Earth. Elsewhere the Old Year was interpreted as the father of the woman, the New Year as her husband; the result was stories of the type represented by the Perseus myth in Greece, by the Balor myth in Ireland. In a third form, the two male demons were conceived as hostile brothers, usually twins, the result being the Norse story of Balder and Hǫðr, and the Egyptian of Osiris and Set.

Often enough the development did not go quite so far, and ritual processions were deemed sufficient to celebrate the coming of spring. The reader will remember the procession of the Rhodian swallow-youths as told by Athenaeus (VIII, p. 360 C), a custom which has not died out in Modern Greece.[4] He will also remember the ritual Hunting of the Wren, as practised in the Isle of Man down to very recent times.

Many of these rites (in fact, probably a majority) have died out, largely through the hostility of the Mediaeval Church; for their frankly cultic and pagan character was in most cases altogether too transparent. Yet in honour to the Church it must be said also that she honestly strove to give something in return for what she took, and the Mediaeval miracle plays with their edifying subjects taken from Holy Writ, the lives of the saints and, in the later Middle Ages, from some patriotic theme such as the story of Joan of Arc in France or that of William Tell in Switzerland, no doubt filled the gap in a certain measure.

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[1] Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum*, ed. A. Holder, Strassburg, 1886, p. 185.

[2] Cf. also Mooney, *Funeral Customs of Ireland*, in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* (Philadelphia), XXV, 226.

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[4] G. F. Abbott, *Macedonian Folklore*, Cambridge, 1903, p. 18.

CHAPTER XVIII

FOLK-LORE, MYTH, AND RELIGION

OF the various sciences enumerated in the Introduction and of which Folk-lore may become an auxiliary science, none stands closer than the History of Religion. As a matter of fact, the materials of Folk-lore have repeatedly been regarded as pertaining in a more or less direct way to the domain of religious beliefs, and a number of folklorists have spoken of them as the ' elder faith ' of a given social group. A dim consciousness of this relationship seems to be chiefly responsible for the astonishing fact that Folk-lore is frowned on in the university circles of certain countries and cannot boast of a single Chair, while courses in scientific salesmanship and other harmless subjects are everywhere given and richly endowed. The same close relationship, let us say, was also mainly responsible for the vagaries of the sun- and moon-mythological schools of the last century and the first decade of the present. The whole matter would therefore deserve, it seems, a certain amount of discussion, were it only to clarify certain problems.

The unfortunate thing about the wretched term ' religion ', borrowed from the Latin by practically all modern civilized tongues, is that it comprises such a variety of phenomena that a satisfactory definition is well-nigh impossible. If we include in an attempted definition the concept of a deity, we run a risk of excluding not only certain forms in which this concept is very imperfectly developed, exists only in embryonic form, as it were, but also the various pantheistic systems, not only the very highest the human mind appears capable of conceiving, but also the central idea of a faith believed in by the greatest number of human beings ; I refer, of course, to Buddhism. On the other hand, if we discreetly omit the concept of a deity and define religion as the sum total of beliefs and practices having reference to man's relationship with the Unknown or Unknowable, we must needs include magic, to the chagrin not only of theologians but also of certain folklorists who would fain see in magic the precursor of the exact sciences. Of the two evils, the second is clearly the lesser one, but even such a definition does not solve all the difficulties, because on account of its very looseness it necessarily includes phenomena which have in common only their purpose but may, and actually do, differ widely in the methods followed to attain that purpose and the ideas underlying the methods. An example will make this clear.

Christianity is admittedly one of the highest forms religion may assume and, having due regard to its long history in the most different parts of this globe, we may distinguish four chief constituent elements: (1) the concept of a personal deity, (2) a set of dogmas or creed, (3) a set of rites, and (4) a mythology. Yet it would be most erroneous to attribute to each of these an equal or even approximately equal importance. On the contrary, the matter is far more complicated, and it is precisely on the question of their relative importance that the various denominations differ most widely and categorically. Nor is it merely a question of denominations. As a matter of fact, every thinking individual must in the last analysis decide the question for himself, and does so, if only subconsciously. Of the four elements mythology was the first to go. It appeared so childish to Origen, as early as the third century, that he had recourse to an allegorical interpretation. If the Middle Ages witnessed a curious revival of it in the form of the *Miracles of Our Lady* and the *Golden Legend*, this is to be explained on the same basis as its recent curious revival in Protestant America, that is, a general and widespread illiteracy. In Europe Humanism and the Renaissance dealt it the death-blow, and the Council of Trent made no attempt to restore it except in so far as it had actually been embodied in the creed. Next the ritual will disappear, as it has in most of the Calvinistic denominations; still later, the dogma will be silently abandoned under the pressure of latitudinarianism; and, lastly, even the concept of the deity will undergo, in the minds of a few select thinkers such as Goethe, Schleiermacher, Robertson Smith, and a few American Unitarians, such as Emerson, a considerable modification. Yet it is clear that not only the vague enough term of 'religion' but even that of 'Christianity' will conveniently cover the flights of thought of an Immanuel Kant and the ravings of a Tennessee divine.

Nor can such a state of facts be held up against Christianity. We find the same in the other so-called monotheistic religions, and Judaism as well as Islam, whether or no they admit it, have their mythology as they have their rites and their creeds.

Folk-lore may adduce useful materials for the history of the concept of the deity or, to use a better word, of the Divine, by assembling data bearing on the lower demonology. Yet it must leave the more primitive forms of that concept to anthropology and ethnography and the higher ones to philosophy and theology. The creeds and dogmas pertain to Folk-lore only in so far as they have incorporated myths, which is not at all seldom ; but the rest belongs to the pursuits of philosophy and theology. Nor can the ritual properly be said to belong *in toto* to the domain of our science. Not all rites have a religious origin, and those which have cannot always be explained by Folk-lore alone ; anthropology and ethnography are at least equally important. What is desirable is a close co-operation of Folk-lore with those sciences. Practically the same thing may be said about mythology, i.e. the science having for its aim an inquiry into the origin and meaning of myths. There again anthropology and ethnography are as important as Folk-lore, certainly far more so than the various philologies, and it is the great merit of Andrew Lang and of the Anthropological School to have first realized this, since the common-sense observations of President Des Brosses in the eighteenth century had passed unnoticed. Yet inasmuch as the bulk of all myths recorded and commonly known are the property of the so-called Aryan and Semitic families, and as parallels from the same ethnic or linguistic group are always preferable methodologically, it would seem that in the domain of mythology Folk-lore is apt to play the more preponderant rôle. This leads us to a closer examination of the term ' myth '.

The Greek word *μῦθος* merely means ' story ', or ' tale ', which is an important admission on the part of the society which first coined the word, to the effect that it drew no fundamental distinction between a ' myth ' and an ordinary tale. We shall promptly see that as a matter of fact there exists no such distinction.

The common definition of ' myth ' is that it is a story attached to the ' gods '. The definition is most unsatisfactory because it operates with the even vaguer term ' gods '. Was Herakles a god or was he a man (as most scholars believe nowadays) ? If the latter opinion be true, can the stories related about him be called myths ? The Argonauts as well as the heroes who fought at Troy were most probably men, yet most of the Olympian gods and goddesses had some part in the fray. Are we to class the stories in question as myths ? All one can say is that after the example of Homer and under the immense influence exercised by his poetry the Greeks agreed to set aside, under the name of ' myths ', a certain set of tales dealing with gods and heroes (though by no means all of them) and that the Romans and after them the moderns took over the term, applying it also to similar stories current among nations whom the Greeks would have classed, or did class, as ' barbarians '. The term, then, gives no information on the origin of these tales, and nowhere do we find a hint to the effect that an identity of origin was even surmised by the ancients. It was only at the time when all myths were put in the Procrustean bed of the allegorical or euhemeristic explanations that such a common origin was *a priori* assumed, no attempt being made to prove it.

Before proceeding to a discussion of the origins of myths, it may be well to inquire into the connexion between mythology and religion, a connexion which has been taken for granted above, when mythology was classed as one of the four elements constituting religion, but which has been often hotly denied, both by Christians and non-Christians.

The question can be answered satisfactorily only by a survey of the religions existing or known to have existed, and the obvious conclusion is that all known religions have their mythology or at least had it once upon a time, in a past stage of their history, that the older and more spiritualized a religion becomes the more it is apt to slough off its mythology, at the same time visibly losing ground among certain strata of its adherents. We even have examples of religions deliberately founded with the intent to make a *tabula rasa* of all myths, classed as polytheism and idolatry, and being compelled, against their will, to readmit afterwards a whole host of myths. We lastly have the example of two great philosophical religions having reached considerable philosophical heights but wisely tolerating the mythology for the benefit of the lower orders, the minds incapable of grasping such lofty truths. The reader will see at once that reference is made to Protestantism, to Islam, and to Brahmanism and Buddhism. The conclusion seems then justified that mythology is, if not absolutely necessary, at least a rather essential and quite useful element in the structure of any religion.

The reason for this intimate connexion of the two is not difficult to guess. Religion as well as mythology requires imagination. Like Heine's mathematician, the honest atheist is as a rule simply one who lacks imagination, and it is no accident that the primitive poets are at the same time seers and priests. Yet whilst the imagination of one type of mind will soar into scientific and philosophical speculations, that of another, incapable of such flights, will still cling to the fancies of childhood and explain the riddles of the Universe by pretty myths.

From this one may be inclined to conclude that, with certain exceptions to be mentioned immediately, both religion and mythology are the product of popular fancy and hence entirely within the domain of Folk-lore. The exceptions referred to would naturally be historical religions, products of individual minds, such as the sect of Mani and Islam, and artificial myths, made in Hellenistic times by Alexandrian poets after the Homeric model. Yet even with these exceptions neither religion nor mythology are in their sum-total genuinely popular products, though it may be freely admitted that they have absorbed numerous popular elements in the form of folk-lore motives.

The historical facts behind the Homeric poetry are unfortunately by no means clear, though the general outlines of the situation admit of no uncertainty. It is different with the Scandinavia and Iceland of the early Middle Ages. There we have a most wonderful mythology, the work of a genius, to wit, Snorri Sturluson, and his school of *littérateurs*, working, of course, on old materials. On the other hand we have a large body of historic documents bearing on the pagan cults and giving an altogether different picture. Snorri's Asgard, the Icelandic Olympus, is crowded with gods and goddesses who, in plasticity and colour, yield but little to Homer's Olympians. The sagas relate in the main that the Norwegian *bonde* worshipped only one god, by no means the most brilliant of Snorri's divine assembly, to wit, Thor, and Thor's name is the only divine name to have been preserved in the Old French documents dealing with the Scandinavians settled in Normandy. A few sagas, visibly of a more aristocratic origin, relate a few incidents of Othin, by no means redounding to that divinity's glory, and the Swedish documents give a similar prominence to the god Frey. There is no exaggeration in the statement that so far as every-day life is concerned the ancient Scandinavians had reached the stage of monotheism even before the introduction of Christianity, if monotheism is understood in the sense of the pre-exilic Jewish monotheism, which did not deny the existence of a score of other gods but claimed one national deity who for a Jew was the only one to come into consideration. Did Snorri then, we ask, create his brilliant world of Teutonic divinities out of nothing? By no means; he merely followed a certain course, the same which had been followed, centuries before, by the authors of the Homeric poetry in Greece and Asia Minor, and this process is properly responsible for the 'mythologies' of Scandinavia and Greece.

In the first place, Snorri and Homer were as much antiquarians as Vergil was; the researches of Dr. E. Mogk [1] and Dr. Gilbert

Murray have made this clear. To create their work they utilized a vast amount of traditional material chiefly coming to them from local cults, often through the medium of older epics, often, no doubt, from direct priestly information. These heterogeneous materials they combined, standardizing them, creating a *genealogia deorum* and, thanks to the vehicle of a *κοινή*, for Homer the Achaean, for Snorri the Icelandic, and their individual artistic skill, gave their creations a currency which in turn reacted, in Greece at least, on the popular religion. Snorri, like Vergil, dealt with a religion dead already; but it is fair to conjecture that had there been no Christianity and had the Norse race held the sway it had in the reign of the great Cnut, extending from Canada to the Caspian, Snorri's mythology would have had as glorious a history as Homer's.

It is therefore wrong to consider mythology in principle as a popular product. At best one may say that it is a poetic reworking of popular materials, and it is the task of the folklorist to analyse the finished products of a Snorri and a Homer and so to get at the popular materials thus utilized. Nor is there any ground for supposing that Homer and Snorri are exceptions. On the contrary, wherever we find a highly developed mythology, whether among the Maori of New Zealand, in Vedic India, or in the empire of the Incas, we find (1) a class of poets, usually in close relations with an organized priesthood, and (2) a *κοινή*, without which even the loftiest creations of the artistic mind would have been doomed to oblivion.

We must next ask ourselves to what extent the mythology thus created became part of the popular religion, and there again the unwary will have a number of surprises. To begin with, Snorri did not take his own creation seriously. He wrote his great work because, in spite of Christianity, the pagan mythology had remained as a *machine* for epic and lyric poets, exactly as Jupiter and Venus had remained in, or rather been readmitted into, the Christian poetry of the eighteenth century. Snorri believed no more in Othin than Pope did in Jupiter. Throughout the larger part of the nineteenth century Homer was regarded in quite a different light, to wit, as the great creator of the popular epic, and in their zeal scholars went so far as to deny his historical existence (always an easy matter) and to ascribe his work to God knows what divine impulse which was postulated as having seized 'the people' (as though the mob of ancient Miletus could have been different from any other mob!). Yet as common sense at last gained the upper hand, it was noticed, and duly pointed out, that a poet who told a story like that of Aphrodite, her husband and her lover, must have lived in a fairly sophisticated society of *bons vivants* and cannot himself have been too serious a believer in his gods and goddesses. His Zeus, for example, is even less of a bugaboo than Voltaire's deity.[2] No doubt, he wrote for a society as emancipated as the upper ten of the Athens of Pericles and the Rome of Augustus.

Yet in poets it is well not only to regard what they say but also what they do not say. And Homer observes a peculiar, one is almost tempted to say a diplomatic, silence about the chthonic deities, Demeter, Kore and Dionysos. Now if one remembers that in the fifth century no less a man than Alcibiades was prosecuted on a charge of having travestied, in his private house, certain cult acts (the mysteries) of these very deities, it is clear that Homer does not say all he knows, and for a very good reason. To be sure, the chthonians were finally drawn into the Olympian family and into the *genealogia deorum*, yet their myths have an altogether different stamp, no doubt genuinely popular.

Snorri observes a similar silence about quite a number of cults, more or less chthonic in character, cults about which we hear in certain sagas, many of which were utilized by the Danish chronicler Saxo Grammaticus. The reason for Snorri's silence is of course a different one. Chthonic cults are bound to a definite locality, and in Snorri's Iceland relatively little can have been known about them.

In order satisfactorily to answer the question about the connexion between religion and mythology, still another factor must be borne in mind. It is a curious fact, though by no means an accident, that religions which have the most highly developed mythologies put the least amount of insistence upon their dogma or creed. Neither in Ancient Greece nor in pre-Christian Scandinavia was it compulsory to accept the *genealogia deorum* and the mythology. In Greece it was obligatory to believe in the existence of the gods and to show this belief by a participation in their rites, always of a purely civic character. Membership in a mystery cult (which was of course voluntary) furthermore entailed a certain amount of discretion. In Mediaeval Scandinavia, before the introduction of Christianity, atheism went unpunished, and though we have reasons to doubt a similar tolerant attitude among the Anglo-Saxons and the continental Teutons, yet it is practically certain that their cults imposed no dogma or anything like it. A set of similar observations made by travellers among tribes adhering to religions of native growth fully confirms this view. The obvious conclusion is that in religions of this type mythology played an altogether secondary part. It was never accepted into the creed, for the simple reason that the very concept of a creed was absent. It is of course useful to keep in mind the connexion, however slender, between mythology and religion, because this connexion may now and then furnish a helpful clue for our inquiry into the origin of a given myth, but in all other respects it is well to regard all myths, once we have broken through the layer of poetic embellishment, as fancies of the lay-mind.

The reason why so much insistence must be laid on this important fact is the blunder committed by the sun- and moon-mythological schools when, in complete disregard of the historical facts, they identified mythology with religion. To Max Müller, Angelo de Gubernatis, E. Siecke, and K. Simrock, the Vedic, Olympian and Eddic religions were a sort of State religions, each being as it were an Established Church for India, the Hellenic world, and the Teutonic peoples from the Polar Circle to the Alps. Thus when they came across a sun myth in the Vedas, in Apollodorus, or in Snorri, they concluded that there must also have been a sun-cult, and a sun-god. On the other hand, if sun-worship was said to exist or to have existed among a given people, as for example the ancient Irish, they concluded that there must also have existed sun-myths; they looked for them accordingly and naturally found them.[3] A careful observation of the facts, however, teaches us that precisely the opposite is true. The Greeks unquestionably have a number of genuinely solar and lunar myths; yet they never had an indigenous sun- or moon-cult, and wherever such sprang up in Hellenistic times, the impulse came from the Orient. On the other hand, the Romans from Aurelian on, the Incas of Peru, and the ancient Egyptians had a pronounced sun-cult, yet sun-myths are conspicuous only by their absence, unless one reckons the divine origin of the Incas and the Pharaohs, a clever dynastic invention, among the ' myths '. The ' sun-myths ' and ' moon-myths ', however, as we have seen in a previous chapter, are largely aetiological tales, designed to explain something, the splendour of the sun as compared with the pallor of the moon, the eclipses, the starry host, etc. If one calls such tales ' myths ', one should for the sake of logic also designate as a myth the good tale which explains how the owl once was a baker's daughter, or why the bear has no tail, or for what reason dogs and cats do not get on well together.

The conclusion of the foregoing considerations may then be summed up somewhat as follows. Myths are merely certain tales, largely of popular origin but utilized and reworked by poets so as often to be considerably modified, loosely connected with certain religions of native growth but never incorporated by them into their creeds and dogmas, only half believed in by the poets and often not taken seriously at all, in short, pieces of popular or poetic fancy as the case may be.

It is clear from this definition that a myth is not, properly speaking, a new type of popular fiction to be opposed, as it were, to the types discussed above. As a matter of fact, any one of these may become a myth by the simple process of being somehow connected, no matter how loosely, with a figure enjoying a religious cult, provided that figure assumes the part of the hero or heroine. Thus the story of the *Quest of the Princess with the Golden Hair* cannot become a myth for the sole reason that Athena or the Virgin gives the hero the magic horse or ship ; but the story of the tyrant destroying his children or grandchildren becomes a myth as soon as the tyrant is Kronos.[4] The merry tale of the *Three Wishes* does not become a myth by the mere fact that the supernatural being granting the wishes happens to be a god, Olympian or Christian ; but the *fabliau* of the wife caught by the husband in the act of adultery becomes a myth when the actors are Hephaistos, Ares, and Aphrodite. In other words, any popular tale may, by a comparatively easy process, become a genuine myth ; in all such cases, the story exists in the first place, the myth is secondary.

This does not mean, of course, that all myths existed at one time as simple stories and became myths only secondarily. The vast majority were unquestionably myths from the beginning in that they were never told of humans or animals. What was their origin ?

Most myths are without doubt by their very character aetiological tales, i.e. attempts to explain something. The various creation stories, without the help of geology or astrophysics, be it remembered, are so many attempts to explain the existence of this earth in its present shape. The gods may intervene, or they may not ; there is no essential difference between the two groups. The jolly story recorded by Heine according to which God smashes the old moons to make the stars out of their fragments, the story of Phaethon to explain the Milky Way, quite a number of catasterisms, i.e. tales relating how certain figures were transferred from the earth to the sky to form certain constellations, all belong to the same class of fancies. The famous story of the Fall of Man is no mysterious myth harking back to solar, lunar or astral lore, but is simply an outgrowth of the old tale explaining why the snake is immortal whilst man is not. The equally famous story of how Prometheus attempted to cheat Zeus grew directly out of a peculiarity of the Greek sacrifice, the custom, that is, of giving to the gods the bones of the animal with the fat slung around, whilst the priests or the community ate the good parts, an admirable procedure revealing once more the common sense of the Greeks. The famous myth of the monsters pursuing the sun and the moon is an attempt to explain the phenomena of the eclipses. It is no bold conjecture to surmise that the Hebrew Leviathan and the Norse Midgard Worm owe their existence in the last analysis to man's endeavour to explain the tides of the ocean. The figure of a certain sea-giant, Orion in the Aegean, Bran with the Celts of the British Isles, Wade in North-western Germany, Thor in Norway, all depicted as traversing the sea, served to explain the same phenomenon.[5] The story of the Man in the Moon is of course known to every one and moreover occurs in one form or other from one end of the earth to the other.[6] The Norse myth of the giant-bird Hraesvelg in the Far North was intended to explain the north wind sweeping over the waters. To repeat, tales of this type are most common and are told of plants and animals as also of man, for example, to explain the varying colour of the skin in the different races. It so happens that when man's ambition waxes and he attempts to find an answer for things and phenomena of which science has considerably later discovered the correct solution, or for such as have not been solved so far or will never be solved, as for example the question of the origin of the visible Universe, he cannot do so without calling on some higher powers, and this alone is the reason why stories of this category may with a certain show of reason be separated from the rest and classed as 'myths'; yet it is well to emphasize the fact that the difference is one of degree rather than one of kind.

A second class of myths may be called historical, not, certainly, because they throw light on pragmatic history, a manifest impossibility, owing to the limitations of the human memory. By 'history' is here meant simply the history of a certain cult or the history of a divinity. For example, in a number of mythologies we hear of terrible wars going on between the gods proper and a class of demons, the Asuras in India, the Titans in Greece, the Vanir in Scandinavia. One might be satisfied, off-hand, to take these myths at their face value and to regard the wars in question as pure reflections of more terrestrial wars which have from the beginning of time formed the delight of certain people and the horror of others. Even such an explanation, rationalistic in the extreme perhaps, is still more satisfactory than to see in those divine struggles one wonders what atmospheric phenomena. Yet the matter admits of an easier interpretation and of a more positive proof. It is to be noted that the Hindoo Asuras find their parallel in the Persian Ahuramazda, which means that the highest being of the Parsee religion bears the same name as the Hindoo demon family. In Greece Zeus himself is descended from the Titans, of whom several either in person or through their offspring still received divine honours in classical times. As for the Scandinavian Vanir, two of them, Frey and Freya, were the chief divinities of the Swedes. It is therefore wise to abandon altogether the distinction between ‘ gods ’ and ‘ demons ’ as purely academic, or rather hieratic, and to explain the struggles in question as the struggles between two rival cults and their priesthoods. For the Scandinavian mythology this interpretation is now generally admitted ; in India and Greece the nature-mythological fancies have not yet, it seems, run their course.

It is perhaps well to caution the reader not to apply this new theory *ad libitum*. We do have struggles which are certainly not the outcome of fights between rival cults, the most outstanding example being the Zoroastrian religion. It might be tempting, to minds not familiar with the historical facts, to conclude that the dualism existing between Ahuramazda and Agramanyuš has its origin in a rivalry of the two divinities, and they may think the conclusion the more justified because certain Iranian sects, undoubtedly descended from the old Zoroastrianism, have established a genuine devil-worship. History teaches us better ; for we know that the Iranian dualism is essentially the product of one human mind, the famous Zarathuštra, and that the modern devil-worship represents a secondary development.

Myths may also throw an important light on the history of a given divinity. The well-known metamorphoses of the Olympians, so charmingly told by Ovid, merely point to the theriomorphic stage of the gods and goddesses in question. If Zeus, for example, snatches away Ganymede in the form of an eagle (for originally the eagle was Zeus himself), or if he abducts Europa in the shape of a bull, or seduces Leda in that of a swan, it merely means that once upon a time the chief deity of a certain tribe was an eagle, that of another the bull, and that of a third the swan. The famous story of Io proves that the fair one was originally a cow and, being a priestess of Hera and an hypostasis of that goddess, that Hera herself was a cow, a conclusion fully confirmed by a certain Homeric epithet bestowed upon her, perhaps without afterthought. The Greeks themselves, in the classical period, appear to have had something of a vague notion of this origin of their metamorphosis stories ; for when they came into contact with the Egyptian deities with their various animal shapes they invented the pretty story that the Olympians in their flight from Typhon had gone to Egypt and concealed themselves by a disguise in animal shape.

Another instance of historical facts being hidden as it were under myths is furnished by the so-called divine attributes with which every mythology provides its divine figures. If the eagle is thus seen to be the constant companion of Zeus, the inference is that once upon a time the eagle was Zeus himself, in his capacity of the thunderer, the eagle being a thunder-bird *par excellence.* By similar inferences we know that Thor once was the robin, Tyr and the Roman Mars wolves, and Artemis a deer.

Of a somewhat related character are the so-called iconic myths, i.e. myths which arose out of the misinterpretation of certain monuments. This category cannot of course be separated from the local legends which have a similar origin and which have been discussed above. The fact that the myth is attached to a divine figure is purely accidental and changes in nothing the thesis of its origin. For example, it is a widespread notion to represent the divinity of fertility in the shape of a boar, the hog being the animal of fertility *par excellence* and hence to this day regarded as a symbol of good luck and riches. Gods of fertility such as the Syrian Adonis and the Swedish Frey were thus represented in boar-shape. Later, when these divinities shed their animal form, the process was quite gradual, and the animal did not disappear all at once but continued as a divine attribute. Thus the boar became the attribute of both Adonis and Frey. When the theriomorphic stage had fallen altogether into oblivion, people naturally began to inquire why it was that the god and the animal were thus inseparable, and the legend (or call it ‘ myth ’) sprang up that the animal was the enemy of the god and had brought on his death, since fertility gods are notoriously mortal. Thus in the Near East we hear of the touching story of the boar killing the young and beautiful Adonis, and in Sweden we learn, through Saxo Grammaticus, that the old King Froði, the euhemeristic form of the god Frey, had in his old age been killed by a ‘ sea-cow ’, sent against him by a ‘ witch ’. The ‘ sea-cow ’ is of course nothing but the famous boar, with golden bristles, the common attribute of the Swedish Frey.

Still more to the point, if that is possible, is the ‘ myth ’ of Tyr and the Wolf.[7] Tyr is fabled to have lost his hand by putting it in the mouth of the famous Fenrir, a demonic wolf and bitter enemy of the Aesir. His successor in the Teutonic Olympus, Othin, is said to find his end by the jaws of the same wolf, whilst Tyr will be swallowed by a gigantic hound, a sort of Cerberus.

Both myths arose out of the fact that Tyr was once a wolf, that the wolf then came to be his divine attribute and that there once existed, all over Europe and the Near East, certain monuments representing a carnivorous animal, often a wolf, in the act of swallowing a man or holding in its mouth a human limb, a hand or a leg. These monuments were misinterpreted as representing the mutilation or the death of Tyr by his ordinary companion, the wolf. In no other way did the strange story of the anthropophagous Lydian king Cambles arise, who was fabled to have swallowed his queen and to have been found, the next morning, with the hand or arm of the wretched woman in his mouth. *Cambles* means literally 'dog-killer' and was an epithet of the lion, who, at Iconium, was represented holding a human hand in his mouth. The good king is merely the euhemerized form of an old lion-god once worshipped all over Asia Minor. The myth of the metamorphosis of Niobe, as is well known, arose out of the peculiar shape of a certain rock, an almost exact parallel to the Tyrolese legend of Frau Hütt, the only differences being that in the Mediaeval story the popular motive of the sin committed by wasting food, most grievous in the eyes of the peasant, has taken the place of the ancient *hybris* and that the avenging deity is of course the Christian, or rather Old Testament, deity instead of the Asiatic and pagan Leto. Again it will be seen that the differences between 'myth' and 'legend' are purely accidental and do not touch the character or origin of the story proper.

Another good example of an iconic legend which in one region has become a regular myth is the story of King Watzmann in Bavaria and the introduction to the Indian epic, the famous *Râmâyana.* In both cases the incident of the metamorphosis of the wild huntsman was probably suggested by a group of peculiarly shaped rocks.[8] A large number, in fact most, of the classical punishments inflicted in Hades upon certain particularly recalcitrant sinners have been shown to have their origin in certain paintings.[9] Sisyphus rolling his stone, for example, owes his immortality in Hades to a painting representing him building the walls of Corinth. The myths of Tantalus and Ixion and their punishments have very much the same origin, and so has that of the sinners obliged to hurl themselves again and again from a high cliff. What the painting originally represented as a single act was misinterpreted as signifying an act repeated *ad infinitum.* Supposing the picture representing Poniatowski leaping with his horse into the Elster, a painting not at all rare in certain old-fashioned French taverns, were misinterpreted in this way and believed to be an otherworld scene, we should at once obtain the new punishment, not thought of by Dante, of the sinner who has again and again to court death by hurling himself into a stream. The next step would be to imagine some sin for which he merits such a punishment and which a good imagination would certainly not be long in finding, and a genuine myth is the result, without our having to incommodate in the least the sun, the moon, the stars, or even the vegetation demons.

Quite as important is another class of myths, essentially aetiological in character, which I shall call 'ritual myths' because they arose out of an attempted explanation of certain rites ill understood at the time when the myth was invented. This class is perhaps the most important from the historical view-point, since the myths belonging to it are apt to give invaluable information on the ritual and hence also on the cult in question. They are therefore likewise historical.

I begin by citing the well-known story of Demeter and Iasion having conjugal intercourse in the open field, a story which has a parallel elsewhere in the myth of Aphrodite and Anchises. Both myths arose out of the well-known and quite widespread fertility rite performed after the ploughing and based on quite common ideas of sympathetic magic. In the case of the Greek myths we know the origin, because we are unusually well informed about Greek agrarian ritual. In the case of the Teutonic and Slavonic religions we know next to nothing about the ritual, except in so far as it can be ascertained by modern survivals. But both in Gothic Spain and in Slavonic Bohemia we find the story of the ploughman who is fetched by the messengers of the queen, proclaimed king and invited to share the queen's bed and to mount the throne, where he becomes the founder of a dynasty. That is the celebrated myth of Libuše and Přemysl and of King Wamba, euhemerized, of course, by the chroniclers. In the more rudimentary form of the myth the queen sent no messengers to the man of her choice but went to meet him in the ploughed field there to celebrate the wedding.[10]

An old Eddic song relates how King Froði, i.e. the god Frey, the god of fertility and king of the golden age, employed two giantesses to grind a magic quern and to grind out health, wealth and happiness for him and his people, but how, being overworked, they lost their good humour and ground instead destruction and ruin, bringing on the end of the golden age and the good king. The Teutonic sources would leave us helpless for an explanation of this strange story. But in Ancient Greece and in the European Middle Ages we meet so-called *cantilenae molares*, sung by the women in charge of the work of grinding on the hand-mill. These songs, so far as we know them, tell of the same kind of golden age and of a good and peaceful king who was responsible for it but came to a sudden end. The ritual was then seen to be connected with the myth of the golden age, and to explain this connexion, the myth was enlarged so as to give an explanation of the sudden end of the good king by the action of the grinding women.[11]

A very curious story and also one of the few that are truly edifying in Greek mythology is the myth of King Salmoneus of Elis, punished by Zeus for mimicking his thunder and lightning. It has its origin in the ancient rite of the rain-making priest-king, who by imitative magic sought to produce an electric storm with the accompanying rain.

The Greek myth of Lityerses, the mower who compelled all strangers to help him in the work of mowing and afterwards killed them by cutting off their heads with his scythe, wrapping their bodies in sheafs of corn and throwing them into the water, until finally Herakles did to him what he had done to so many others, originated in a well-known harvest ritual, as was proved by Wilhelm Mannhardt.[12]

The famous myths of the dragon-seed of Kadmos and Iason and of the fight of the earth-born giants is to be explained on the basis of the ancient ritual of the *lithobolia* or stone-throwing. Quite independently the same rite, on Teutonic soil, gave rise to the parallel myth of Othin sowing discord between the farm servants of the giant Baugi and thus inducing them to kill one another.[13] The story of the stoning of Satan as current among the Mohammedan Mecca pilgrims has a similar origin.

There exist myths or legends, both in Greece and in Scandinavia, of humans acting the rôle of a divinity in a solemn procession, usually to get out of a difficulty. In the Aegean the hero is the mythical king Thoas, the father of Hypsipyle, in Sweden the outlaw Gunnar Half. In both cases the myth originated with a well-known rite in which a human being, man or woman, played the rôle of the divinity as its personification or embodiment, in an annual procession.[14]

Lastly, the considerable number of myths reporting a divine marriage, be it of Zeus and Hera, Zeus and Chthonie, Zeus and Kore, Kadmos and Harmonia, Othin and Gunnlǫð, etc., all go back to a ritual analogous to that of the Ploughman King and his wife, discussed above, in which human beings represented the divine personages, the underlying idea being always a fertility charm designed to ensure plentiful crops to the agricultural community.

It seems logical next in order to discuss a series of myths which may have been acted in ritual, though we cannot be absolutely sure of the fact, having no definite historical proofs. I refer to the death of the vegetation demon. Sir J. G. Frazer, when he wrote his admirable *Golden Bough*, believed the conclusion warranted that once upon a time the vegetation demon was actually put to death. I do not doubt indeed that such was the case in quite a number of instances, yet I have become diffident in a number of others. Take the official Attis and Adonis myths with the hero's death brought on by the tusks of a wild boar—clearly a story of iconic origin and on a par with the myths of the Norse Frey and Tyr ; there is little to warrant the hypothesis of a ritual slaying. In the case of Tammuz we have in addition the hint that he was ground to death, and F. Liebrecht [15] in the last century believed himself justified in postulating a ritual slaying and listing the stories in question under the heading of 'cruel punishments'. What comes to mind at once is the Scottish tale of John Barleycorn :

> There were three kings unto the East,
> Three kings both great and high,
> And they have sworn a solemn oath
> John Barleycorn should die,

a song so wicked that it has deprived poor Robert Burns of the honour of a monument in the city of Buffalo. Well, is it seriously thought that the myth embodied in the song is based on an ancient Scottish ritual in which a human representative of John Barleycorn was treated in this fashion ? I must frankly count myself among the honest doubters who believe that, if a ritual grinding there was (and that I do not doubt), the victim was the real John Barleycorn perhaps in the shape of the last sheaf regarded as a human doll. A ritual there still was, but a ritual intimately connected with what borders on personification and symbolism. The matter is not without importance for the better understanding of one of the most obscure myths of Ancient Greece, the story of the slaughter of the child Zagreus by the Titans. With Miss Harrison I think it useless and highly erroneous to have recourse to cannibalistic rites to account for this ghastly story. If, however, we see in Zagreus merely John Barleycorn and in the Titans the 'three kings unto the East' who 'have taken his very heart's blood' and who 'drank it round and round', [16] the ghastly myth becomes far less so ; it will turn out in fact to be as harmless as the old Scottish song, though from a different point of view the latter will still continue to be most dangerous, at least in certain countries.

On the border-line of the genuinely historical myths stand the stories connected with an ' epiphany ', i.e. the appearance of a divinity in a certain locality. That epiphany is represented as a rule in the form of an annual procession of the god or goddess with his *cortège* of priests, priestesses, and temple servants. Usually, there is no special story connected with the rite, which merely has for a starting-point the chief sanctuary of the divinity in question. Thus the epiphany of the Magna Mater, of Isis, of the Batavian Nehalennia, and of the Teutonic Nerthus starts from the temple or sacred grove of the goddesses, and we know for certain that in the case of the former two this sanctuary was distinctly secondary in that the cult of the divinities in question had never started there, both being Oriental goddesses of relatively recent importation in Rome. Yet in Greece we have the curious myth of the Hyperboreans connected with the Apollo cults of Delphi and Delos. It is all very well to attribute the strange idealization of the enigmatic Hyperboreans to the fancies of a Hekataios, the fundamental fact of the Hyperborean embassies and their tribute admits of no doubt. They point to a Nordic provenance of the Apollo cults in question and to the peculiar tenacity with which tribal relations of this sort, especially if strengthened by religious ties, are apt to be kept up even for centuries. Those who doubt the Hyperborean embassies to the Aegean may be reminded of a similar embassy sent to the great Theodoric at Ravenna from far-off Sweden, centuries after the Goths had left that country. There were no obvious political reasons to warm up that old relationship which had been definitely broken with the exodus of the Goths and which, according to human foresight, could never be re-established, and yet the ties of blood were thus shown to be stronger than water, even without the religious tie, for the Swedes were still heathen, whilst the Goths had become Christians upon their entering the *Orbis Romanus*. The Hyperborean myth then throws a very important light on the history of the Hellenic Apollo cult ; it is an historical myth in the strict sense of the word.

It would, however, be a grave error to conclude from all migrations of gods and divine dynasties that are reported on the pages of euhemeristic chroniclers anything in regard to the history of their cults. One might imagine, for example, since Euhemeros makes of Zeus a king of Crete, that the Zeus cult originated in that island, an inference in absolute contradiction to the historical facts. Again, Snorri Sturluson, in the first chapter of his great work, the *Heimskringla*, reports that the Aesir had come to Scandinavia from the East, that is, from

Asia. Yet it would be altogether wrong to conclude from this statement anything about the Asiatic origin of the Aesir cult. On the contrary, we know definitely that the cult of the chief of the Aesir, that is of Othin, originated in the Rhine country.[17] Snorri's account is based, in the last analysis, on a false etymology.

This leads us to the discussion of a class of myths which owe their origin either to a false etymology or to a 'rabbinic' text interpretation. A good example of the former is the story of the mythical ship *Naglfar* as reported by Snorri. He gravely tells the following tale. In the end of time men will become so wicked that they will refuse to comply with the pious duty owed to the dead, to cut the nails of their fingers and toes. Out of these nails the ship *Naglfar* will be constructed in which the demons, i.e. the giants, will come sailing to destroy the Aesir and their world. As a matter of fact the name of the ship has nothing to do with the nails of fingers and toes; but its first element is simply a word meaning 'death'; the vessel is merely the ship of the dead.

On a par with Snorri's or his predecessor's fanciful etymology of *Naglfar* is the (late) Hellenic myth of Orion's birth, based upon the same type of folk-etymology, though unfortunately less appetizing. Suffice it to say that it relates how three Olympians create Orion in much the same way as the Aesir and Vanir create Kvasir in Snorri's *Edda*, though it is not their spittle they use for the purpose.

The so-called rabbinic interpretations of textual passages are as fruitful in results as folk-etymologies. They consist, as is well known, of an arbitrary wrenching of a sentence from its original context. The Talmud and the literature of the midrashim are full of examples. Yet the most famous of them all, and the most important from the European view-point, is the Christian myth of the fall of Lucifer, originating in the famous passage of Isaiah (xiv. 12).

If one bears in mind the rôle of this myth in the history of human thought and in literature from Dante to Milton and Carducci, one cannot help thinking with Sir James G. Frazer that mankind has progressed as much by its errors and follies as it has by its successive discoveries of what we are pleased to call the truth.

None the less quite a number of myths are very much concerned with the truth, or what is considered the truth, and the pronounced didactic character of all popular fiction which we have commented upon a number of times before comes out equally strongly in mythology. The story of *Naglfar* owes its origin to a false etymology; yet it could not have assumed its extant shape had it not been for the custom of cutting the nails of the fingers and toes of the deceased before burial and for the desire to inculcate this custom as a pious duty which must not be neglected. In Ancient Greece one is surprised at the number of myths turning upon a case of *hybris*, i.e. an attempt of man to be a superman, a thing which the Apolline civilization held in utmost detestation. Thus the myth of Niobe, in spite of the rock first originating it, could have assumed its peculiar form only in the ancient civilization. The Central European parallel of *Frau Hütt* sufficiently indicates what it would have become had the rock found itself in the Tyrol instead of in Asia Minor. The close parallel of Lot's wife had for a starting-point, no doubt, a salt pillar standing somewhere to the south of the Dead Sea. Yet the existence of that pillar alone would never have sufficed to furnish the Biblical story in the form we know it. The problem of a *hybris* of course never occurred to the pre-exilic Jews, and so the Jewish Niobe was guilty of quite a different lapse. She looked back, against the express prohibition not to do so, imposed upon her by the Jewish Dioscures, the sons of Jahveh. But the prohibition is at bottom a very ancient taboo, known in Mediaeval Europe no less than among the South Sea islanders.—Snorri tells a story of how Thor was sorely wounded in his fight with a giant, a stone having penetrated into his skull. He calls on the wise woman Groa to remove the piece by the power of her charms. In this task she appears to be successful; at all events the piece begins to move, when the god tells her how in gratitude he had carried her son through the icy streams of the North. Overjoyed, Groa forgets her charms, and the stone remains in Thor's skull. The two myths, Thor's fight with the giant and his rescue of the bold Aurwandil have nothing in common, and if they were thus connected one suspects that it was to inculcate the well-known maxim that one must never thank the witch doctor openly for his miraculous cures, or else the charms will lose their effect.[18]

But where are the 'anthropological' myths, the impatient reader will ask, the myths, that is, which according to Andrew Lang could have originated only in savagery? There are few, unless one be willing to extend the age of savagery to nineteenth-century Europe (to which I personally see no objection). The aetiological myth explaining the eclipses might be counted among these savage myths, though it is well to remember that the Athenian general Nikias appears still to have believed in it, as did the quite highly civilized Mexicans when Cortez first visited them, as did the mediaeval French peasants when they formed the saying, *Dieu garde la lune des loups*. Quite 'primitive' also is the famous story relating the swallowing of a party or parties by some monster, Kronos swallowing his children, Zeus swallowing Metis, the Whale swallowing Jonah, the Wolf swallowing Othin and Little Red Riding-Hood. Andrew Lang pointed out a parallel story from the South Sea and thought he saw in the myth a savage explanation of day and night. That such may be the case in a number of instances cannot be denied. But this explanation does not hold for all variants we know. For one thing, the eclipse myth just discussed is but a sub-category of the one we are dealing with now. Secondly, the Wolf swallowing Othin and Little Red Riding-Hood is simply the North and Central European parallel to the Greek Cerberus, the lykomorphous divinity of all-devouring death. The whale of Jonah, finally, cannot be separated from the Italian *pescecane* occurring also in Lucian's *True History*. It is conceivably of Mesopotamian origin [19] and a primitive explanation of day and night. Yet this 'primitiveness' was no obstacle to Mr. William Jennings Bryan's swallowing it whole, just as the whale swallowed Jonah.

Nor is the 'swallow myth' the only one possible to explain, to the savage mind, the phenomena of the eclipses. The belief is quite widespread that they (as well as the new moon) are the result of a heavenly wedding of sun and moon. This latter notion is found not only among peoples whom we contemptuously like to call 'savages' (such as the inhabitants of Tahiti, for example) but also among the Lithuanians, the ancient Greeks, the Vedic Indians, nay, even among the Hebrews of Old Testament times. The wonderful nineteenth psalm, beginning with the words, *The heavens declare the glory of God*, has been convincingly shown to have contained, at a former stage of its textual existence, a reference to Jahveh (here identical with the ancient Semitic moon god) who celebrates his wedding with the sun, after the fashion of the old Arabic 'beena' marriage, by 'going in' to the tent which he as bridegroom had erected for her.[20]

A second fairly primitive myth is the story of Uranus and Ge, separated by their children whom they cramped by their tight embrace. A variant of the myth is found among the Maori of New Zealand. Whether it is extremely primitive I rather doubt because it presupposes the notion of a Father Sky and a Mother Earth, a notion which comes dangerously close to a deeper insight into the life of vegetation and the agricultural stage of human civilization.[21]

There is the well-known myth of Persephone who eats a piece of pomegranate in the lower world and is therefore claimed as the property of Hades. As was recognized long ago, the tale is based on the notion that the taking of food establishes a bond between host and guest. But to find this doctrine carried to its logical conclusion one does not have to go back to pre-Hellenic Greece. In Mediaeval England the old woman tells the hero about to set out for Elfland: 'Eat a bite and drink a drink, and you will never see the green hills of England again.'

Lastly I might mention the cycle of the Heavenly Twins, derived from savage superstitions connected with twin births. Yet apart from their godhead with its set of supernatural attributes and superhuman powers, their rôle as givers of fertility both animal and vegetable, as helpers in war and *in periculo maris*, as friendly warners, as clever physicians, as guardians of truth (since they are the sons of the Sky who wields the lightning-bolt), as quarrelling twins, etc., they can in no way be said to stand in the centre of a genuine mythology. Their catasterism, i.e. their identification either with the constellation of *Gemini* or with the morning and evening star, is manifestly late.

The identification of mythology and religion, essentially wrong, as we have seen above, for a long time led to the assumption that, contrary to stories of the ordinary type, myths did not migrate except as part of the missionary propaganda of certain religions. If the thesis here defended, to wit, that myths are nothing but ordinary stories and but very loosely connected with religion proper, be correct, it would follow that myths are no less capable of migrating from country to country than are fairy and merry tales, or animal and migratory legends in general. Such is indeed the case.

Mention has been made above of the story of Teiresias, unquestionably of Indian origin and loosely attached, in India, to the figure of the god Indra, in Greece, to those of Zeus and Hera. Yet it is doubtful, in the first place, whether this story is a myth at all; in the second place, granting that it is one both in India and Greece, whether it migrated as a myth or rather (as I am inclined to think) as a good story, the loose connexion with divine figures being quite accidental. But there are better examples testifying to the migration of genuine myths.

It was a current conception in the Ancient Orient as well as in the Orientalized part of the Roman Empire that the world was periodically subject to destruction, that the 'great year,' as it was called, had its summer, ending with a general conflagration, when all the planets stood in the sign of Cancer, and that it had its winter, ending with a deluge, all the planets standing in the sign of Capricorn.[22] The myth of the deluge, originating probably in Mesopotamia, had spread to Asia Minor and Greece in prehistoric times, since there can be no doubt of some historical connexion between the Noachian and Deucalion's Flood.[23] But the notion of the general conflagration also spread, first to Iran, where it was incorporated in the system of Zarathuštra, then to the Mediterranean countries, where it came to form one of the tenets of the Stoic system, and ultimately to Scandinavia, where it led to the famous myth of Ragnarök, the ' twilight of the gods ', as it has been called, quite poetically but falsely.[24]

Hand in hand with the idea of a destruction of the world goes the notion of a general state of wickedness gaining the upper hand shortly before the catastrophe. The corresponding account of *Genesis* is of course present to all English readers ; it is no Jewish invention but forms a part of the Mesopotamian lore. But the same idea is at the base of the myth of the Antichrist, certain Sibylline oracles, the Merlinian prophecies so gently ridiculed in *King Lear*, and the Norse Fimbul Winter with the complete dissolution of all human ties.

Lest I be thought a Pan-Babylonian I shall next adduce a cycle, certainly not of Babylonian origin, though no doubt Asiatic. Sir J. G. Frazer has most convincingly shown that the story of the Fall is ultimately nothing but an expansion of the aetiological tale trying to explain why the snake is immortal whilst man is mortal. Yet in the vast array of parallels he has given, to which I could add only a few more, nothing is said about the woman's share in this transaction so disastrous for man. In the Semitic, Hellenic and African parallels it is always man that is cheated. So how did poor Eve get into the story ? As one looks for parallels elsewhere, the Greek myth of the beautiful Pandora occurs immediately. Hesiod's version is a hopeless hodge-podge,[25] and even the name of the fair one appears to be secondary and probably even spurious. As a matter of fact, the tale gives the impression of a migratory legend ill understood by Hesiod or his source. Yet one thing is clear. The envy of the gods sends a woman to bring on the destruction and misery of mankind, and this woman succeeds in outwitting Prometheus (Epimetheus is a late and quite colourless invention of artificial myth-makers), just as Eve outwits her husband. Nor is the story absent from India. The great epic, the *Mahâbhârata*, knows of two brothers, Sundas and Upasundas, powerful because living in perfect harmony, until the same envy of the gods sends them a beautiful maiden over the possession of whom they promptly fall a-quarrelling and finally kill one another. Nor is it possible to separate from this cycle the numerous seduction stories, current both in Mesopotamia and Ancient India. An ascetic excites the envy of the gods (who have good reason to fear for their divine prerogatives), and, to divert him from his pious contemplations and self-inflicted torments, they send him a fair charmer, who is only too successful in her enterprise. The basic idea of this legendary cycle can be summed up in the French saying *Cherchez la femme.* It is neither primitive nor can it be called the common property of all mankind. On the contrary, to the average savage and barbarian the woman is a useful beast of burden, and her influence upon the affairs of men is nil. The idea that the evil came into the world through a woman is itself inseparable from the strange ascetic current which entered Europe in post-Homeric times and culminated in the foundation of ascetic sects such as the Orphics, the Pythagoreans, and others; an historical connexion between Eve and Pandora is *a priori* to be supposed.

The mention of the names of Sundas and Upasundas calls to mind another migratory myth. Sundas and Upasundas were no ascetics, and we should not know the true reason for the envy of the gods toward them did we not learn from other Indian sources that they attempted to enter heaven to join the assembly of the gods, if not altogether to oust them from their exalted seats. The measure of the deities in sending the fair one to create discord among the brothers is therefore one of self-defence pure and simple. Yet the motive of the brothers reminds one immediately of the famous myth of the Tower of Babel, in its extant form rightly regarded as an aetiological story to explain the diversity of language. The book of *Genesis* tells us nothing about the motive behind the construction of the tower besides the fact that it was to be a sort of Eiffel Tower redounding to the glory of the builders and useful for purposes of orientation. Other Jewish texts give more details. According to one group it was meant to be a place of refuge in the event of a second flood; according to another, it was meant to be a pillar to prevent the heavens from tumbling down. Whatever the original motive, it is clear from the extant text that the tower was to reach to the vault of heaven and that Jahveh, evidently not doubting in the least the feasibility of the scheme, decided that the best means was to divide the builders, just as the Indian deities had thought, and this aim he attained by bringing about a diversity of language. Nor is the tale foreign to Greece.

There we hear of the brothers Otos and Ephialtes, the Aloadai, as they are often called, twins, like Sundas and Upasundas, who decided to storm the heavens and to sack the dwellings of the deities. For this noble purpose they went to work and piled Mt. Ossa on Mt. Olympus and Mt. Pelion on Mt. Ossa. Driven thus into a corner, Zeus could only strike the bold mortals with his lightning-bolt. Again some historical connexion is extremely likely, far more so, at all events, than a spontaneous development in India, in Mesopotamia, and in Greece.

Lastly, there is a widespread cycle of myths which would deserve a good monograph with a careful utilization of all newly-discovered materials and with a discreet omission of all sun- and moon-mythological fancies. I refer to the fire-god, master-smith and demiourgos *par excellence*, Prometheus and Hephaistos in Greece, Lug in Ireland, Loki in Iceland, not forgetting, of course, his rôle in the Christian mythology of the Orient and the European Middle Ages. To forestall an accusation of hasty and sweeping identifications and generalizations, let me analyse, in the briefest possible way, the motives constituting this cluster of myths.

1. A divine or semi-divine being falls into disfavour with the powers that be (Prometheus, Hephaistos, Lucifer, Loki, Typhon), because
2. He is guilty of rebellion against the said all-wise and of course all-good powers (Prometheus, Hephaistos, Lucifer, Loki, Typhon).
3. He is hurled down from the heavenly abodes (Hephaistos, Lucifer, Typhon).
4. His fall explains the peculiar fact that he is limping (Hephaistos).
5. He is lame, though a different cause is given (Wayland).
6. He is identified with volcanic activities underground and earthquakes (Prometheus, Hephaistos, Typhon, Loki).
7. He is banished from the dwellings of the gods and fettered on a lonely rock (Prometheus, Lucifer, Loki).
8. He is a fire-god and master-smith (Prometheus, Hephaistos, Lug, Loki, Wayland).
9. He is fabled to be relieved of his chains in the last days when the end of the world is impending (Lucifer, Loki).
10. He is a demiourgos, the inventor of many useful arts which he taught to man (Prometheus, Hephaistos, Lug, Wayland, Loki, and Lucifer, according to the tenets of certain gnostic sects).

The territory of this cycle extends from the Caucasus and Iran to Ireland and Iceland. Some of the constituting motives are dimly discerned to have their origin in aetiological tales. For example, the fettered giant, by his supposed convulsive movements, explains the earthquakes, whilst in the very centre of the cycle stands the uncanny rôle of the smith regarded with awe in all primitive and barbaric societies.[26] What concerns us here is simply the fact that this figure, picturesque in the extreme, as all readers of *Paradise Lost* know, has found a place and an almost identical rôle in at least half a dozen religious systems, if one includes in the count, as is but fair, Islam and the curious Manichaean system with its various offshoots of devil-worshippers still existing in the Levant.

This domain of mythology, standing as it does near the borderline of Folk-lore and Religion, would deserve a far more detailed treatment than can be given to it in the present work. I hope, if circumstances favour the project, to come back to this subject in a special and more comprehensive work to be published in French.[27]

One word in conclusion. Unlike the materials of Folk-lore, the myths are, so far as the white man's civilization is concerned, a thing of the past. The last of them died under the hammer blows of the great rationalists of the eighteenth century, and no trick of the demagogue or the obscurantist can bring them back to life. It was left for the nineteenth century to demonstrate, by an accumulation of facts, how they had arisen in the first place. Now that they are no more, one may well regret this loss of the blooming fancies of man's childhood. Such regrets are vain, for those lofty creations of the human brain share, alas, the fate of everything else terrestrial and hence but transitory. And looking back at those noble structures of the Hellenic Olympus and the Teutonic Walhal, which are gone never to come back, one may well say with the poet :

. . . like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on ; and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

THE END

NOTES TO CHAPTER XVIII

[1] *Novellistische Darstellung mythologischer Stoffe Snorris und seiner Schule*, Helsingfors, 1923 (*F.F.C.* 51).

[2] Cf. Michel Bréal, *Pour mieux connaître Homère*, Paris, s.d.

[3] The best example for this fallacy is the otherwise very useful and informative book of Dr. Roger S. Loomis, *Celtic Myth and Arthurian Romance*, New York, 1927; cf. my review in *Gött. gel. Anz.*, 1928, pp. 376 sqq.

[4] *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, XCVIII, 78–86.

[5] *Etudes*, pp. 79 sqq.

[6] S. Baring-Gould, *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages*, London, 1877, pp. 190 sqq.

[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 11 sqq.

[8] *M.S.G.V.*, XXIX, 96–100.

[9] Salomon Reinach, *Cultes, Mythes et Religions*, II (1906), pp. 159–205.

[10] *R.H.*, XLVI, 516–47; LVI, 265–84.

[11] *M.L.R.*, XIX, 325–34.

[12] *Mythologische Forschungen*, Strassburg, 1884, pp. 4 sqq.

[13] Cf. my study *Othin and Gunnlödh* in *Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni*, IV (1928), pp. 76 sqq.; *Etudes*, pp. 70 sqq.

[14] *Acta philologica Scandinavica*, III, 226–33.

[15] *Zur Volkskunde*, Heilbronn, 1879, p. 259.

[16] *Othin and Gunnlödh, loc. cit.*, pp. 69 sqq.; *Etudes*, pp. 63 sqq.

[17] H. M. Chadwick, *The Cult of Othin*, London, 1899.

[18] *Etudes*, p. 79.

[19] Sir J. G. Frazer, *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament*, London, 1918, III, 82 sq.

[20] R. Eisler, *Jahves Hochzeit mit der Sonne*, in *Orientalistische Studien Fritz Hommel zum* 60. *Geburtstag gewidmet*, pp. 21–70; cf. *Journ. of the American Society for Oriental Research*, 1927, pp. 25–46.

[21] Cf. A. Dieterich, *Mutter Erde*^{3}, ed. E. Fehrle, Leipzig, 1925.

[22] Cf. R. Eisler, *The Messiah Jesus*, London (forthcoming).

[23] On the story of the great flood and its migrations cf. Sir J. G. Frazer, *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament*, London, 1918, I, 104 sqq.; W. Anderson, *Nordasiatische Flutsagen*, in *Acta et Commentationes Univ. Dorpatensis, B. Humaniora*, IV, 3 (1923).

[24] Olrik-Ranisch, *Ragnarök*, Heidelberg, 1922; G. Neckel, *Studien zu den germanischen Dichtungen vom Weltuntergang*, in *Sitzungsber. d. Heidelberger Akad. d. Wissensch., phil.-hist. Kl.*, IX, No. 7, Heidelberg, 1918.

[25] Cf. A. S. F. Gow, *Elpis and Pandora in Hesiod's Works and Days*, in *Essays and Studies presented to Sir William Ridgeway*, Cambridge, 1913, pp. 99–109.

[26] Cf. R. Andree, *Ethnographische Parallelen und Vergleiche* I, Leipzig, 1878, pp. 153–64; B. Gutmann, *Zeitsch. f. Ethnologie*, XLIV (1912), pp. 81–93.

[27] *Le Mythologie Universelle*, Paris, Payot, forthcoming in 1930.

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A SYSTEMATIC bibliography of folk-lore has existed only since 1917, was published in 1919, and even now lags several years behind. I refer to E. Hoffmann-Krayer, *Volkskundliche Bibliographie*, Berlin-Leipzig, De Gruyter. For the non-German material it is moreover far from complete. The reader will find an excellent folk-lore bibliography in the second volume of Hermann Paul's *Grundriss der germanischen Philologie*, carrying him a little beyond the beginning of this century. It must be supplemented and brought up to date by reference to the various folkloristic chapters in the annual called *Jahresbericht über die Erscheinungen auf dem Gebiete der germanischen Philologie*, covering English, Dutch, German, and Scandinavian folk-lore and, to a certain extent, also the comparative field. In the case of Mediterranean material, recourse should be had to the corresponding annual of Bursian, dealing with Greek and Roman folk-lore and religion, of which the last important volume is O. Gruppe's *Bericht über die Literatur zur antiken Mythologie und Religionsgeschichte aus dem Jahren* 1906–17, Leipzig, 1921. For the mediaeval and modern Greek field it is well to consult the excellent bibliographies of the *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*. Lastly, a general check-up with the help of the *Religionsgeschichtliche Bibliographien* in the *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* is desirable.

To those who shun this labour (and there are necessarily many who do) one can only recommend the use of a well-indexed system of files with the proper entries of every new book or article that may come to their notice, and the consultation of certain encyclopaedias, such as Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Pauly-Wissowa's *Real-Encyklopaedie*, W. Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, and the admirably indexed *Golden Bough.*

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